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FAMOUS CRIMES

PAST AND PRESENT

ONE · PENNY

THE MURDER BY GEORGE VICTOR TOWNLEY.

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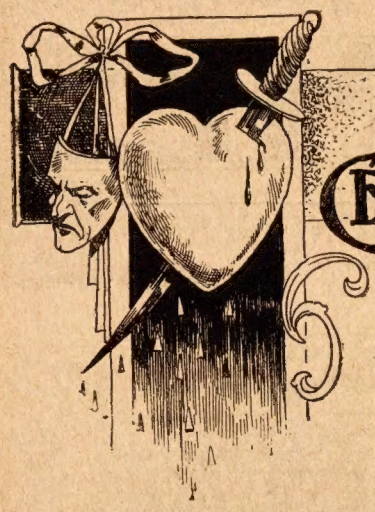


THE MADNESS OF GEORGE VICTOR TOWNLEY

An extraordinary case with a strange ending.

"Constancy lives in realms above,
And life is thorny and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain."

—COLERIDGE, "Christabel."

PART I.

THE winter of 1855 will long be remembered as one of the severest ever known in England. As week after week went by with no sign of the cruel black frost breaking, even Englishmen at home were able to realise from their own experiences something of the awful sufferings and hardships which our gallant soldiers were enduring in the trenches before Sebastopol. I passed that winter in "Sleepy Chester," as Rudyard Kipling calls the ancient city of the walls and "rows." The Dee was frozen for forty miles, and skaters had a glorious time over the long reaches of splendid ice. But to all who were not skaters that dreary, protracted spell of Arctic weather brought nothing but misery and discomfort.

Among the incidents of that memorable winter one lingers with special vividness in my recollection. It was a Twelfth Night children's party, and the life and soul of that party was a handsome girl of fifteen, one of the merriest, jolliest lasses I ever met. I see in my mind's eye now her flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes, her bonnie face rippling with fun, and all the budding promise of beautiful womanhood in her features and her figure. She seemed born for a happy life. And who could have dreamed that a terrible and tragic end was in store for that bright young creature before she was eight years older?

For that handsome, high-spirited girl was Bessie Goodwin, whose murder by her lover thrilled all England with horror and created a sensation which I have hardly known paralleled in my time. It was not, however, so much the actual tragedy itself which stirred the public feeling as the extraordinary efforts made to prove that the murderer was insane, and, therefore, not responsible for his acts. The theory of insanity was strained to the utmost, and never, probably, has that theory, as applied to criminal responsibility, been so fiercely discussed and criticised as in the case of George Victor Townley, the murderer of Elizabeth Goodwin. For this reason there are few more interesting cases to the student of criminology. In telling the story here, however, I shall lay more stress upon its human interest than upon its aspects as a problem in mental disease, and when I have told the story I think the reader will agree with me that, apart from its bearing upon the theory of insanity, it is a thrilling and romantic tale of love, and passion, and jealousy.

At the time when I knew them Miss Goodwin and her parents resided in Chester. Her father, Mr. Henry Goodwin, I recall as a tall, distinguished-looking man, who had been an officer in the Austrian cavalry, and was one of the finest amateur flautists in England. He and his flute were in great requisition at all social functions, for his fascinating manners made him a favourite in Chester society. Mrs. Goodwin, I think, kept a ladies' school, in which she was assisted by her daughter Bessie. But when she was about twenty the latter left home to keep house for her grandfather, Captain Goodwin, of Wigwell Grange, a man of some mark in the county and a Justice of the Peace. The old gentleman, who was close upon eighty, had a great affection for his granddaughter, whom he made his constant companion.

Captain Goodwin's eldest son was a doctor in Manchester, and in the year 1859, just before she went to live with her grandfather, Bessie met at her uncle's house a young man named George Victor Townley, between whom and herself there quickly sprang up a strong attachment.

Townley was the eldest son of a well-known commission agent in Manchester, who resided with his family at Hendham Vale, about a couple of miles from the city. They held a good position in society, and were all more or less artistic in their tastes. Music, in particular, was their hobby—the daughter was gifted with exceptional vocal powers, and the two sons were both accomplished musicians. George Victor, in addition to his musical gifts, had refined literary tastes, considerable acquirements as a linguist, and fascinating manners. He was, in short, a cultured and intellectual gentleman. In Bessie Goodwin he found a congenial and sympathetic companion; he fell in love with her and she with him, and they became engaged. But as George Victor's position and prospects offered no immediate hope of his being able to marry, the engagement was not recognised by either family. For young Townley had been allowed to do just as he pleased and indulge his dilettante tastes without attempting to adopt any profession. He had no inclination for business, and his father made no effort to force him to take up any occupation. His knowledge of languages made him to a certain extent useful to his father in his business, and he attended the office, when he felt disposed, as a sort of clerk or foreign correspondent. But he had no fixed position or salary. Mr. Townley, senior, though prosperous and well-to-do, was not wealthy enough to make his son an allowance sufficient to marry upon, and as there appeared little prospect of his ever earning a competence by his own exertions, it was not surprising that Miss Goodwin's relations strongly disapproved of the engagement. So strong, indeed, was their disapprobation that the engagement was broken off.

But the young people were sincerely attached to one another, and after an interval of a few months, during which, I believe, they kept up a clandestine correspondence, they met again, and the engagement was renewed. At this time I think there can be no doubt that Bessie really was in love with George Victor, though her passion was never so deep and strong as his. When she was with him his charming manners, his cultured tastes, his agree-

able person, his warm, impassioned love-making, took her heart by storm. She was completely under the spell of his fascination. But when she was away from him her feelings towards him cooled. In her case absence did not make the heart grow fonder. And then, her grandfather, of whom she was very fond, made no secret of his hostility to the match. He had very reluctantly tolerated the engagement, but Bessie knew very well that he was still bitterly opposed to it, and, indeed, he let her know very plainly that he thought she was throwing herself away and wasting the best years of her youth upon a man whose prospects in life were as vague and indefinite as they well could be.

So matters went on till the summer of the year 1863, when an incident occurred which quite changed the spirit of Bessie's dream. There came to Wigwell Grange on a visit a young clergyman of good family and excellent prospects—an attractive, agreeable man—in every respect a most eligible suitor. He was fascinated by Miss Goodwin the moment he saw her. For she had developed into a most charming woman—bright, intelligent, handsome, full of spirit and vivacity. His attentions soon became pronounced, and Bessie did not resent them. On the contrary, she found herself more and more drawn to this new lover, who had already become a great favourite with her grandfather. The old gentleman, in fact, did all he could to encourage his guest in paying court to his granddaughter, and evidently cherished the fervent hope that this new and most satisfactory suitor might supplant the man to whom he so strongly objected. It is not improbable that the young clergyman had been invited to Wigwell Grange with this object. For Captain Goodwin had made up his mind that Bessie should never marry George Victor Townley with his consent.

The absent are always in the wrong, says the French proverb, and the more Bessie Goodwin reflected on her absent lover the less she liked him. Here she had the prospect of an early marriage presented to her with a man who could give her the comforts and even the luxuries of life—in place of a protracted engagement to a man with no profession, no settled occupation, and no certainty of being able to support a wife for years. Then her heart told her that she liked the new lover better than the old. Moreover, there was the knowledge that by throwing Townley over she would gratify her grandfather, from whom she had expectations which she would certainly forfeit if she married against his will. It was obvious that the old gentleman wished her to marry this new suitor, and when the young clergyman proposed she accepted him. Her grandfather warmly commended her for arriving at so sensible a decision.

So the deed was done, and on the 14th of August, 1863, Bessie Goodwin wrote to George Victor Townley the letter which was destined to be her death-warrant. In that letter she begged the man to whom she had been engaged for four years to release her from her engagement, though apparently she concealed from him the fact that she was actually engaged to a new lover. Unfortunately that letter was destroyed under circumstances which I shall narrate presently, and there was nothing but the imperfect recollection of Townley's mother, to whom he read the letter, or portions of it, to prove what the contents were, or how the appeal for release was worded. I cannot think that Bessie Goodwin was candid with her old lover. She led him to believe that her grandfather was forcing her against her will into marriage with a man whom she did not love as she had loved Townley. Whereas the fact of the matter was that she had fallen in love with the young clergyman and had accepted him of her own free will. Had this letter been preserved it might have thrown an important light upon the tragic events which followed.

LYING THERE IN HER DEATH AGONY.

We can gather, however, from Townley's reply the effect which the letter produced upon him. It is evident that to his mind the appeal of his fiancée did not convey the idea of an irrevocable decision. It left some grounds for hope that she might be induced to change her mind, that it only needed his presence to kindle the spark of love once more into flame and keep her faithful to her troth. He took a whole day to consider his answer, and on the 16th of August he wrote as follows to Miss Goodwin:

"Hendham Vale, Sunday.

"My dearest Bessie,—Dearest you will always be to me; to say that I am not terribly cut up would be a lie, but, at any rate, you know I am not the man to stand in your way. I answer nothing to your last letter except that I wish to hear from your own lips what your wishes are, and I will accede to them. You know me too well to suppose that I should give way to any unnecessary nonsense or sentimentalism. I have had a singular run of good and bad luck lately; it suffices to say that I have an offer to leave England. Before I go I wish to see you once again, and for the last time, though God knows what misery it gives me to say so. You will admit that my desire to see you is but natural. Say in your next where you will meet me. I will come by the first or second train from Derby on Tuesday or Wednesday morning, whichever suits you; of course, without anyone knowing. The sooner it is all settled the better for both parties.—Ever, dearest Bessie, your affectionate,

"George.

"P.S.—I arrived too late from Bolton to answer yesterday. Will you write by return?"

On the Monday he wrote again:

"Dearest Bessie,—It is doubtful whether you will get the letter I wrote you yesterday till to-morrow. I posted it myself last night at eleven o'clock, at the general office (I could not before), and, being Sunday, could not make out about the mails, so I put it into the extra-stamp box for the chance of its going.

"This is simply to say that in my haste I mentioned Tuesday or Wednesday, forgetting that I should have to leave here to-day in order to see you to-morrow—that is, if I see you in the morning, as on the last occasion; but if it suits you better I could arrive by the same train that Kate and I came by, and you could meet me the same evening, I returning the following morning. I suppose it would not be possible the same night. I think if we say Thursday evening or Friday morning it will be best, as then there will be plenty of time for you to say which you prefer, so at any rate in your next say at what time and whereabouts I can see you. I suppose anywhere between your house and Whatstandwell would do. I am ill and thoroughly upset, and I do not wonder you are. We shall both be happier and better in mind, as well as in body, after this last interview. Address, care of W. Arrowsmith, Gilnow Mills, Bolton, where I am going back to-morrow. Of course, if I hear to-morrow, and you fix time and place of meeting, I shall be at your appointment, coûte qu'il coûte—Always your affectionate,

"G. V. T.

"Trains.—I can arrive at Whatstandwell Bridge at 4.2 afternoon, or at 9.34 or 11.37 in the morning, whichever you like."

On the following Wednesday, the 19th, he wrote again as follows:

"Gilnow Mills, Bolton,
"Wednesday.

"My dear Bessie,—I will only say here that I will arrive by the train you mention (11.37 a.m., Friday morning) and that I hope, dear Bessie, you will not bother yourself unnecessarily about all this as far as I am concerned. For my own peace of mind I wish to see you, which I hope you won't think selfish. Du reste, I only repeat what I have already said—I have but to hear from you what your wishes are, and they shall be complied with, and that I have sufficient savoir vivre not to make a bother about what cannot be helped. You can write to the Midland Hotel, Derby, where I shall stay to-morrow night, or leave a note at the inn at Whatstandwell Bridge for me. Don't let me be the cause of any row between you and your G. P. If you like to call at the inn I will not stir out till you come; but I leave all this to your judgment.—Ever yours affectionately,

"G. V. T.

"Miss Bessie Goodwin, Wigwell Grange,
"Wirksworth, Derbyshire."

On the same day Miss Goodwin wrote a letter to Townley as follows:

"My dear George,—I write this in the greatest haste to tell you not to come on (any) account. I leave here to-day, and can't tell when I shall or can be back again. I do not wish to see you if it can possibly be avoided, and, indeed, there will be no chance now, so we had better end this state of suspense at once, and say 'Good-bye' without seeing each other. I feel sure I could not stand the meeting. If you write once more within the next three days I can get it, but not later than that time without its being seen, for my letters are strictly watched, and even opened.—Yours truly,

"Bessie.

"Wednesday. Immediate.
"G. V. Townley, Esq., Hendham Vale,
"Smedley, near Manchester."

This letter reached Hendham Vale on the Thursday morning, and Townley's mother, perceiving from whom it came, opened it, and immediately telegraphed to her son, who was then staying at Mr. Arrowsmith's, at Bolton:

"Letter from B. (Bessie). Come at once. Will meet you at the station. Will wait. Immediate."

Immediately on receipt of this telegram Townley left Bolton and returned to Hendham Vale. From there he went on the same day to the Midland Hotel, at Derby, where he slept. On the following morning, Friday, 21st of August, he left Derby, and went to Whatstandwell, the nearest station to Wigwell Grange, which is about a mile and a-half distant. He reached this place about half-past eleven and went to the Bull's Head Inn, which is close to the station. In the inn he asked if there was a note for Mr. Townley, and on learning there was not he asked for a glass of brandy and water. Having had another glass of brandy, he left the house and went in the direction of Wigwell Grange. But on the way he stopped to call on the Reverend Richard Harris, a friend of the Goodwins, and headmaster of the Grammar School at Wirksworth. What passed between them I will let Mr. Harris narrate in his own words:

It was half-past one on the 21st of August when Townley came to my house. He said to me:

"I have called on you as a friend of Miss Goodwin. I suppose you know there is an engagement between us?"

I said, "I understood there was an engagement, but that it had been broken off."

He said, "She has written to me to break off the engagement, and declines to see me. I want to know how matters stand."

I said, "Anything I know is in confidence, and, therefore, I cannot satisfy you."

He said, "I will find it out somehow or other."

He then asked who was the clergyman who had been staying at Wigwell.

I said, "There has been one there, but I decline to give his name." I had been told that there was an engagement between Miss Goodwin and this clergyman who was staying there three weeks or a month ago. He then asked if Miss Goodwin was at Wigwell, and if I thought any coercion had been used towards her. I said she was at Wigwell, but no coercion had been used towards her that I was aware of. He said:

"Sooner or later I must see her. I have written to release her from the engagement, but I must hear from herself that she gives it up. She is of age and must

please herself. I know I am not a good match, and have no wish to stand in her way."

I then told him I must leave him, as it was my school-hour (two o'clock), but if he would call at half-past four I would see him again. He then left and came again at half-past four.

I told him his best course was to write a note to Miss Goodwin and send it by post, requesting her to see him in the morning. He said he had already written and without effect. I said:

"If you were to call at the house perhaps Miss Goodwin would see you."

He said he would do so, and get it off his mind. He left, saying he would call again, but did not do so. His manner was that of an ordinary man, perfectly calm and collected. There was nothing to attract my attention. I had only seen Townley once before. That was at Mr. Goodwin's. I was told of the engagement with the clergyman by Miss Goodwin herself on the previous Wednesday.

"WHAT'S AMISS? WHAT HAVE YOU THERE?" ASKED THE CAPTAIN.

It is noteworthy that two hours and a-half elapsed between Townley's first and second visits to Mr. Harris. What he did during that interval I have never been able to discover. Whether he roamed about the place brooding over his wrongs or whether he took refuge in some secluded spot and there mapped out a scheme of revenge no one knows, for no evidence was ever adduced to account for those two hours and a-half which he passed alone between his first and second visits to Mr. Harris.

On leaving Mr. Harris after the conversation given above Townley appears to have acted promptly on that gentleman's suggestion, for at twenty minutes to six he arrived at Wigwell Grange and asked for Miss Goodwin. He was shown into the drawing-room, and at the door was met by the young lady, who invited him to accompany her into the garden. They remained there in earnest conversation for half an hour, and then returned to the house. Townley left, but evidently on the understanding that they were to meet again, for at a quarter to seven Miss Goodwin set out from the Grange in her walking dress to keep her assignation. No doubt she was afraid that her grandfather might encounter Townley if he remained in or near the house, and in that case there would have been a terrible scene, for the old captain was a hot-tempered man and was incensed against his granddaughter's lover for his persistent and unwelcome attentions—indeed, he had forbidden Bessie to hold any further communication whatever with her discarded lover.

It is easy to believe that George Victor had much to say, and that Bessie felt bound to let him have his say out, though she must have known that all his entreaties for a renewal of the engagement would be in vain. Possibly, in her eagerness to get her lover away from the Grange before her grandfather should discover his presence she was ready to make any promise, and reluctantly consented to a further meeting, painful and futile though she knew it would be. At any rate she left the Grange at a quarter to seven that August evening, all unconscious that she was going to her death. She met her lover in Wigwell Lane, and they were seen walking together there between eight and nine o'clock. What followed is thus described by Reuben Conway, a labourer in the employ of a Mr. Bowmer, who lived opposite the Grange:

On the night of the 21st, between eight and nine o'clock, as I was going along the turnpike road from the hall towards the Wigwell Lane end, I heard a moaning noise, which appeared to come from the direction of the Mill Lane end. I ran forward, and found Miss Goodwin guiding herself by the wall and coming towards the house. Her face and the front of her dress

were covered with blood. She asked me to take her home, and said there was a gentleman down there had been murdering her. I put my arm round her and carried her about twenty yards. She asked me whether I could see anyone, and on looking down the road I saw Mr. Townley sixty or eighty yards below the lane end, and nearer the lane end than the place where the blood was afterwards found. He was crossing the road, and then came towards me.

When I first saw him he was about forty yards away from the hunting gate. As he came up I went towards him, and asked him who had been murdering Miss Goodwin. He said he had stabbed her. I asked him to go and help me, and he took hold of her head and I of her body, and we carried her towards Wigwell. He called her "Poor Bessie!" several times, and said, "You should not have proved false to me." She said nothing. We laid her down near a gate, and he asked me for something to put round her neck to stop the bleeding. I said I had nothing, and he asked me to go for help. I asked him if he would stop with her, and he said he would.

I then went to Mr. Bowmer's yard for help, leaving Mr. Townley with Miss Goodwin.

So George Victor Townley was left there alone with his victim. As one thinks of that solitary vigil what an awful and pathetic picture imagination conjures up! The autumn twilight deepening into darkness, the appalling silence, the lonely lane, and those two tragic figures—alone—the girl lying there in her death agony, and beside her the man who had loved her so passionately, his hands now dripping with her blood! I cannot conceive a more weird and awesome scene. What passed between the dying girl and the lover whose fierce jealousy had sent her to her doom no one knows or ever will know. For the only human being who could have told held his peace.

Five minutes—which must have seemed almost as many hours to that solitary watcher—elapsed before Conway returned alone. He found Townley holding a shawl tightly round Miss Goodwin's neck as if to staunch the flow of blood from the wounds he had himself inflicted. The man looked at Townley and asked if she were still living.

"Yes, she is still alive," was the tranquil reply, and at that moment Miss Goodwin corroborated the statement by faintly moaning, "Take me home!"

Then George Victor and Reuben Conway lifted her from the ground, and together carried their ghastly burden till they had to lay it down and rest.

At this juncture a Mr. Seeds and his brother, to whom Conway had given the alarm, came up.

"Who has done this?" asked Mr. Seeds sternly.

"I have done it," replied Townley calmly.

Then in silence the four men raised the now unconscious lady and bore her homewards. They had not gone far when they were met by another labourer, James Conway, who in a scared voice asked, "Who has done it?"

Townley, without a trace of emotion, nodded his head towards Reuben Conway, and said as calmly as before:

"I know, and he knows. I am the man who did it, and I shall be hanged for it."

The words had scarcely left his lips when all four were startled by a deep groan. Miss Goodwin had for a moment regained consciousness—a sigh followed the groan—and then they caught the whispered words:

"I am dying! I am dying!"

That was her last utterance on earth. The rest was silence. When they had carried her a little farther Townley suddenly said:

"Stop! She is dead!"

They laid her down. George Victor bent over her and kissed her tenderly; then, lifting her head, said sadly:

"Yes, she is dead! I have killed her!"

It was true. Bessie Goodwin had breathed her last.

As the four bearers, the two Seeds and the two Conways, bore their lifeless burden within the gates of the Grange, with Townley walking beside them, they were met by Captain Goodwin and his housekeeper, Ann Poyser, who had been alarmed by the mysterious absence of Miss Goodwin.

"What's amiss? What have you there?" asked the captain, peering into the gloom.

With tactless abruptness, Mr. Seeds blurted out the truth.

"It is your granddaughter Bessie, murdered."

The old man hardly took in the meaning of the words at first.

"What nonsense are you talking?" he said testily. "Who would murder my granddaughter?"

"It is not nonsense, but sober truth, Captain Goodwin," rejoined Mr. Seeds.

"Who did it then?" asked the old man fiercely.

Townley stepped forward and said quietly, "I have done it."

"You? Who are you, sir?"

He produced two packets of letters.

"My name is George Victor Townley."

"My God! my God! You—you to murder my poor Bessie! You villain!"

Townley made no reply, and the bearers took the body into the kitchen, where they laid it gently on the floor.

For two or three minutes there was silence, as the old man, with his face working strangely and his body quivering with emotion, looked down upon the bleeding corpse of his granddaughter. He was the first to break the silence. Looking up at Townley, more it seemed in sorrow than in anger, he said in a broken voice:

"What made you do it?"

Coldly and calmly George Victor made reply:

"She has deceived me, and the woman who deceives me must die."

Captain Goodwin then beckoned to Townley to follow him into the drawing-room. When they were alone Townley said with perfect composure:

"I told her I should kill her. She knew my temper. I have some things which I should like you to take charge of, if you have no objection. I shall be searched after my

arrest, and would rather these things should not get into the hands of the police."

With that he held out his watch and chain, a handful of money, and a couple of rings.

Captain Goodwin angrily declined to touch anything belonging to the murderer of his granddaughter.

"Well, at least, you will not, I hope, refuse to take charge of these letters of Bessie's."

He produced two packets of letters and gave them to Captain Goodwin, adding:

"Will you take care of them? You may read them, burn them, or do what you like with them. I don't wish them to be brought into court."

Captain Goodwin reluctantly accepted the packet of letters. "I kept them," he said afterwards at the trial, "for a few days, and then threw them all into the fire. I did not read a line of them. I was asked by the police for the letters, and, suspecting that they had some improper motive, I burnt them, unread. I thought they wanted to pump me, and being annoyed at that, I burnt the letters."

In the meanwhile a police-constable had been sent for. On his arrival at Wigwell Grange Townley walked up to him, and said:

"I wish to give myself up for murdering the young lady."

"I then," said the constable subsequently, in giving his evidence, "cautioned him, and asked him if he was aware of the nature of the charge he was giving himself up for."

"He said, 'Yes, quite so, and I will go with you quietly, only let me see her first.'

"I then said to him, 'What have you done with the instrument or knife you committed the deed with?'

"He took a knife out of his pocket and gave it to me. It was wet with blood. I then took him into the kitchen. He looked at the body steadfastly, but did not speak. On the way to the lock-up he said:

"'I am far happier now I have done it than I was before, and I trust she is.'

"I searched him and found two other knives (penknives) upon him. Next morning I asked him if he knew anything about a shawl. He said, 'I saw one on the road, and threw it over the wall.' This was Miss Goodwin's shawl. I examined the road and found a small pool of blood at the corner of Wigwell Mill Lane. At the hunting gate, which is about 200 yards from the lane and nearer the Grange, I found another large pool of blood. I did not notice any between the two places. I said, 'Are you aware of the nature of the charge?' not because I doubted whether he was, but because he seemed so anxious to give himself up."

It will be seen then that there was no possible doubt as to the perpetrator of the crime, because he admitted his guilt without any hesitation and with a cool, almost cynical indifference, which left a most disagreeable impression upon all who heard him make the avowal. He appeared to be perfectly aware that he had committed a cold-blooded murder for which he expected to be hanged. He expressed no repentance for the deed, but rather regarded it as a duty imposed upon him—an act of stern justice, which the circumstances of the case compelled him to execute.

The only possible plea which could be set up in his defence was insanity. And yet his calm self-possession while he watched the dying agonies of his victim, and the absence of any sign of emotion when he looked upon her corpse and confessed himself her murderer, seemed to indicate that he was in perfect possession of all his mental faculties when he committed the deed, that he knew perfectly well what he was doing and what the consequences of his act would be. In fact, there was nothing whatever in his speech or demeanour to warrant the assumption that his mind was unhinged. Public curiosity, therefore, was roused to a pitch of intensity to know what form the plea of insanity would take, and by what perverted ingenuity counsel for the defence could show that George Victor Townley was not responsible for his actions when he deliberately murdered Bessie Goodwin.

The trial, which was looked forward to with the keenest interest, commenced at the Derby Winter Assizes on the 12th of December, 1864, before Baron Martin, one of the ablest and most clear-headed judges then on the Bench. Mr. Boden, Q.C., and Mr. Bristowe conducted the prosecution, and Mr. Macaulay, Q.C., and Sergeant O'Brien were specially retained for the prisoner. The court was packed with an eager and expectant audience when George Victor Townley was marshalled to the dock, and in a firm voice pleaded "Not Guilty."

Counsel for the prosecution then proceeded to tell the story of the crime as I have already unfolded it to the reader.

The only evidence for the Crown which I need quote is that of Dr. Newton Mant, who thus described the nature of the wounds inflicted:

"I wish to give myself up for murder

I was called into Wigwell Grange on Friday evening, and found Miss Goodwin dead. There were three wounds on the right side of the neck, one a stab behind and below the right ear; the second a stab in front of this, superficial; the third wound, still farther in front, three inches long, and extending nearly to the chin. The back part of this wound appeared to have been produced by a stab directed downwards and backwards. The external carotid artery and the internal jugular vein were severed. These were severed by the third wound. The first wound was probably given from behind, and was not mortal. I should have thought that a person could not have walked after receiving the third wound. The knife produced (an ordinary clasp knife, found on the prisoner) would have caused the wounds. I saw the prisoner that night. He appeared to be perfectly calm. I was with him ten or fifteen minutes in the drawing-room. There was much blood upon him.

It was not suggested by the prosecuting counsel that the murder was premeditated. On the contrary, it was admitted that there was no evidence to show that the prisoner

went to Wigwell with the intention of murdering Miss Goodwin, but everything pointed to the probability that the idea of murder never occurred to Townley until he found that all his impassioned pleading failed to move her from her resolution.

But this was not the theory put forward for the defence. The prisoner's counsel relied on proving that Townley was and always had been insane, and that the murder was the culminating act of insanity, which had been in his blood since his birth.

Before the witnesses for the defence were called, however, Baron Martin interposed and said:

"I shall tell the jury that if they believe that, although there might have been disease of the mind to some extent, yet if the prisoner knew that the act he was committing would probably cause death and that the doing it would subject him to legal punishment, there was criminal responsibility."

TO BE CONCLUDED.

Robbery Through Hunger.

In the year 1662, when Paris was afflicted with a long and severe famine, a gentleman named Monsieur de Sallo, returning from a summer's evening walk, accompanied only by a page, was accosted by a man, who presented a pistol, and in a manner which betokened the novice asked him for his money. M. de Sallo, observing that he came to the wrong person, and that he could obtain but little from him, added: "I have but three pistoles, which are not worth a scuffle; so, much good may it do you with them. But, like a friend, let me tell you you are going on in a very bad way." The robber took them, and, without asking for more, walked away, with an air of dejection and terror.

The fellow was no sooner gone than M. de Sallo ordered his page to follow the robber, to observe where he went, and to bring him an account of all he should discover. The boy obeyed, pursued him through several streets, and at length saw him enter a baker's shop, where he observed him change one of the pistoles and buy a large brown loaf. With this salutary purchase he went a few doors farther, and, entering an alley, ascended several pairs of stairs. The boy crept up after him to the topmost storey, where he saw him go into a room, which was in almost total darkness, only the light of the moon stealing through the windows affording sufficient light for him to distinguish the persons in the chamber. Peering through a crevice he perceived the wretched man cast the loaf on the floor, and, bursting into tears, cry out: "There, eat your fill; this is the dearest loaf I ever bought. I have robbed a gentleman of three pistoles; let us husband them well, and let me have no more teasings, for, soon or late, these doings must bring me to ruin." His wife, having calmed the agony of his mind, took up the loaf, and, cutting it, gave four pieces to four poor, starving children.

The page, having thus performed his commission, returned home and gave his master an account of all he had seen and heard. De Sallo, who was much moved, commanded the boy to call him at five o'clock next morning. He rose accordingly, and took his boy with him to show the way. He inquired of the neighbours the character of the man who lived in such a garret, with a wife and four children, by whom he was informed that he was a very industrious man, a tender husband, and a quiet neighbour, that his occupation was that of a shoemaker, and that he was a neat workman, but was overburdened with a family, and struggled hard to live in such dear times. Satisfied with this account, M. de Sallo ascended to the shoemaker's lodgings, and, knocking at the door, it was opened by the unhappy man himself, who, knowing his visitor at first sight to be the gentleman whom he had robbed, prostrated himself at his feet. M. de Sallo desired him to make no noise, assuring him that he had not the least intention to hurt him. "You have a good character," said he, "among your neighbours, but you must expect your life will be cut short if you are so wicked as to continue the freedom you took with me. Hold your hand; here are thirty pistoles to buy leather; husband it well, and set your children a laudable example. To put you out of further temptations to commit such ruinous and fatal actions, I will encourage your industry. I hear you are a neat workman; you shall, therefore, at this time, take measure of me and my lad for two pairs of shoes each, and he shall call upon you for them."

The whole family seemed overwhelmed with joy; amazement and gratitude, in some measure, deprived them of speech. M. de Sallo departed, greatly moved, and with a mind replete with satisfaction at having saved a man, and perhaps a family, from the commission of guilt, from an ignominious death, and perhaps from everlasting judgment.

Murder Houses.

May I ask if you have ever passed the night in a room in which a notorious murder has been committed? I have on three occasions. I rented an apartment in a house in Manor Place, Walworth, some six years ago. It was at No. 16, and I only took the place for a week, but I had the satisfaction—if there was any—of knowing that I had spent seven nights in the room in which William Godfrey Youngman murdered his young brother preparatory to butchering his sweetheart, his mother, and another brother for motives of petty gain. Two years later I had business at Liverpool, and I took occasion to pass a night at the Leicester Hotel, in Upper Grenville Street, the scene of the slaughter of Mrs. Henrichson, her servant, and her children by Manrich Gleeson, or Gleeson Wilson, in 1849. This vampire took rooms in this house, slept on the premises one night, and got up the next morning and murdered the entire household. I slept in the same room—the back bedroom on the second floor—as this miscreant had occupied, and my night's rest was disturbed by dreams of the frightful series of crimes. I have also stayed at the house in Burton Crescent—I am asked not to mention the number—which was the scene of the murder of a widow named Samuels, in the seventies, the perpetrator of which, if he be alive, is still at large.

Many other murder houses in London are familiar to me. There is the little house in Priory Street, Kentish Town, where Mrs. Pearcey murdered Phœbe Hogg because she was the wife of the man she loved. The premises have been occupied incessantly since the time of the crime, from which fact it may be inferred that we are less emotional and superstitious as a people than we were even a few years ago, since it used to be the custom to alter the name even of the road in which a great murder occurred, and in every way to purge the house of any identification with the tragedy enacted therein. How many people nowadays could point out to you the little street once called Miniver Place—in Bermondsey—and show you the obscure dwelling in which Patrick O'Connor met his death at the hands of the Mannings? I had often passed the place, though the street is now known by a different name. The same might be said of the house in Lambeth—close to the Hercules Tavern—where James Greenacre, together with his paramour, Sarah Gale, were arrested for the murder, accompanied by mutilation, of Sarah Brown. At No. 28, Montagu Place, Bedford Square, a singularly atrocious murder was enacted in 1828—Corder's year. The housekeeper at the time was found in the basement with her throat cut and her head battered in. A well-connected young ne'er-do-well, named Jones, was tried for this murder, but acquitted, though he was probably guilty, and is said to have afterwards confessed. This house—a fine building—failed to let for many years after this tragic affair.

Granard Lodge, Roehampton—the scene of an atrocious murder in 1842—is still standing, and bears the same name as when Daniel Good was tried and convicted. It is a very fine mansion, standing in its own grounds, with stabling about a quarter of a mile away. These stables were the scene of the murder and the dismemberment of the corpse, and they are in no particular different to what they were when Good, the coachman, lived there. I have been shown the very corn-bin in which the first horrible discovery was made.

Cheering.

Prisoner (who has just been sentenced to penal servitude for life, to his lawyer): "It's a rare long time to be in prison, guv'nor, ain't it?"

Lawyer (wishing to be encouraging): "Yes, it does seem rather long; but cheer up! Perhaps you won't live a great while!"

Life of Charles Peace.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.—(Continued).

"I WANT a four-penny, guv'nor," said the boy.

"Oh, you're one of the haristocratic customers—are you?" said the man, in a jocular tone.

"You'd better make him fork out. I should like to see his money first," cried the woman, folding her arms across her breast like an Amazon.

"Now, then, boy, down with the dust," said the man.

Alf fumbled in his pocket; he wanted to keep a penny in his pocket for a loaf in the morning. He drew forth threepence.

"Well, it's hardly worth wrangling about," said the landlord. "A penny won't hurt us much either way."

Before going upstairs he went into the kitchen of the lodging-house. This was a long quaint room, its walls covered with disgusting figures; the floor was covered with dirt, and a wooden seat projected from the wall all round the room.

In front of this was ranged a series of tables, on which lolled men and boys.

A number of inmates were grouped round the fire, some kneeling, washing herrings—of which the place smelt strongly—others without shirts seated on the ground, and others drying the ends of cigars they had picked up in the streets. As for the assembly, it was of the most heterogeneous description.

Some were, like Alf, in dirty smock frocks; others in old red plush waistcoats, with long sleeves. One was dressed in an old shooting jacket, with large wooden buttons; a second in a blue flannel sailor's shirt; and a third, a mere boy, wore a long camlet cloak reaching to his heels, and both the ends of the sleeves hanging over his hands.

Two women were seated in one corner of the room; their dress and demeanour denoted that they were merely visitors, who had been attracted to the spot by curiosity or some other motive.

One of them was quite young and extremely good-looking; the other was elderly. They were whispering to each other.

The younger of the two women beckoned to the young birds'nest seller. He drew towards them, having already guessed that their discourse related to himself. In this he was not mistaken. As he approached an extraordinary thing happened. The old woman and the boy started at the same moment, and each gazed earnestly into the other's eyes, which were lighted up with a mingled expression of curiosity and surprise.

The effect was most remarkable. They both stood for one moment as if rendered motionless by some sudden thought, and petrified into stone.

This feeling, however, was but a transient one, and soon passed away. The woman turned impatiently on one side, as if to crush and smother the weakness which appeared reasonless because it was intuitive.

But she could not conceal from herself that some mysterious and overpowering influence had been plainly manifested for a brief period. What it was she was at a loss to discover.

Alf Purvis stood motionless before the females.

"You're a brave little fellow," said the younger one. "What is your name, my lad?"

"Alfred Purvis, marm."

"Ah, just so; and your trade?"

"I've been brought up to the farming business, but am now on my own hook. I'm a birds'-nest seller—that is when I can get any customers."

"And do you like the calling?"

"Pretty well."

"Oh, not very well—eh?"

"I should like it better if I could see my way towards something for the winter."

"I suppose you have run away from home, or something of that sort—eh?"

"I wasn't used well, and I did leave of my own accord. I half wish I hadn't now; but it goes against the grain to return to Stoke Ferry Farm."

"Ah, that's where you came from?"

"Yes, marm. Do you know the place?" cried Alf, in a tone of evident anxiety.

"Not I, indeed; never heard of it before you mentioned the name. You street boys are a funny lot. After running about you cannot bear to be kept indoors or be under any sort of control. It is natural it should be so, I suppose. Do you know how to read and write?"

"Ah, yes, marm, I can write pretty well, and as to reading, I'm never tired of it; nothing pleases me better than an interesting book."

"Indeed; I should have hardly thought you could have much time for reading."

"I have not since I've been in London, but before I left the farmhouse I had lots of time every evening."

"Well, my brave young fellow, I think I may be able to do something for you. Will you call upon me to-morrow if I give you my address?"

"Yes, marm, I will be sure to do so."

She wrote something down on a card, which she handed to Alf. As she gave him this she slipped a shilling in his hand, and then she and the old woman rose and left the kitchen.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

We left Aveline Gatliffe at the door of Earl Ethalwood's seat, known as Broxbridge Hall. The engineer's wife and child were conducted into the presence of the proud old lord, who was anxiously awaiting their appearance.

Mr. Chicknell introduced the visitors, and at first there was an air of restraint and timidity upon the part of Aveline, and a certain amount of hauteur in the manner of the earl. This, however, soon wore off.

"I think, my lord," observed the lawyer, with something like triumph in his tone, "that there cannot be much mistake in the matter. If any doubts did exist in the mind of your lordship they are now dispelled."

The earl nodded.

"It is Aveline, Aveline risen from the dead—my own Aveline."

"You hear what his lordship says?" cried the lawyer, addressing himself to the lady.

"I do, sir," she answered. "I am so wonderstruck that I hardly know how to comport myself, or to thank you sufficiently for the interest you have taken in the welfare of one who was to you a perfect stranger."

"I have had a duty to perform which I have endeavoured to carry out to the best of my ability," answered Mr. Chicknell. "I may observe that it was a difficult and delicate task, but it is a genuine pleasure to me to meet with the approval of my client and yourself."

While these few remarks were being made, the earl had been gazing intently on the young woman, and he nearly lost his self-possession as his eyes fell upon her beautiful face.

Aveline, who did not know very well what to say or do, observed quietly to the earl:

"I am sure you will love me for my dear mother's sake."

She had all the Ethalwood grace of manner and movement.

The earl was touched, for she had crept up to him and laid her hand gently on his arm.

He kissed her on the forehead; he looked at the violet eyes,

with their golden light; he laid his hand on the shining masses of waving hair.

Then he sighed.

He was thinking of other and earlier days in his troubled life.

His memory conjured up the image of the wife who had proved so false to him, who fled with her paramour, and died in a foreign land unheeded and uncared for.

How about the young creature before him?

Was she to be trusted?

Time will show.

"I shall learn," said he, in answer to her question, "to love you best for your own sake, and no other."

"Ah!" ejaculated Aveline, a little disconcerted, "for my own sake?"

"Yes," he answered. "I think you good and true—nay, I am sure of it. Is this little fellow your son? You seem to me to look so very young that I can hardly believe you are a mother, or that I am a great-grandfather," he added, with a smile.

"You mustn't tell people that, my lord," observed Mr. Chicknell, in a bantering tone.

"They'll find it out without anyone telling them," answered the earl, taking the boy in his arms, and, placing him on his knee, looking at him with evident interest.

"He has something of the Ethalwood face," he said musingly.

"Ah! most undoubtedly. I saw that from the very first," cried the lawyer. "Indeed, to say the truth, he resembles your lordship in a most marked degree."

"You think so?"

"Certainly. It is plain and palpable enough to the most obtuse observer. Quite the Ethalwood cast of feature."

Aveline proved, to her grandfather's delight, that she, too, had some of the old Ethalwood spirit and pride. Although the magnificence of the interior of Broxbridge Hall was enough to startle and surprise one brought up in a humble sphere of life, she did not express surprise, but was perfectly self-possessed.

There was an air of refinement about her which went far towards propitiating the proud old nobleman, who, if he disliked any one thing more in this world than another, it was vulgarity, or even anything that bordered on it.

In this respect he had no reason to complain of his granddaughter, whose natural grace of manner won upon him the more he became acquainted with her.

He was, in short, delighted with her; she seemed to bridge over a wide gulf which separated the present from the past.

The long, long, solitary years he had passed had made him something of a misanthrope, now a new light broke in upon his gloomy path, which seemed all of a sudden to be irradiated with sunshine.

If he could only have this young and fair creature all to himself, make her his darling, how happy would he be! But then there was a husband in the way. This last-named he would not countenance nor receive under any circumstances.

These thoughts rushed rapidly through his mind as he sat nursing and fondling the little boy.

"You will be my guest for a short time. You will do me the pleasure of remaining at Broxbridge," said he suddenly, "so that we become better acquainted."

Aveline turned towards Mr. Chicknell, and said, "It was understood, was it not, that I was to remain for a short time?"

"Oh, yes, certainly," returned the lawyer. "I told Mr. Gatliffe so; that's a distinct understanding."

The earl's countenance darkened.

"I have no desire to coerce or control you in any way; indeed, I have no right to do so, but still, as a favour——"

"There is no favour in the matter, my lord," cried Aveline. "I will remain with you for the present."

"Spoken like a scion of the house of Ethalwood," exclaimed the earl, in evident delight.

The wife of the young engineer was taken by the housekeeper of Broxbridge into a superb suite of rooms, which had already been prepared for her. She was wise enough not to give expression to the surprise she felt at the grandeur of the apartments.

There was a day and night nursery for the boy, and there was a neat, smiling maid to attend to him.

A suite of four rooms had been set apart for the sole use of Aveline herself. These were magnificent and luxurious as though they had been for a queen. They consisted of a boudoir with rose silk hangings, rare pictures, fragrant flowers, exquisite statuary, and furniture of the most modern beautiful design; a sleeping chamber, all white and gold; a dressing-room, fitted up with every luxury that the proudest lady in the land could not fail to be satisfied with; and a small library, where she could read, write, or study at will.

As a matter of course, she was treated with the greatest deference by all the servants at Broxbridge.

"I hope you will find all you desire in these apartments," said the housekeeper, "but should you require anything else, your orders will be attended to without a moment's delay."

"These are intended for me, then?" returned Aveline, looking round at the beautifully-furnished rooms.

The housekeeper answered in the affirmative.

A pleasant-looking maid now entered, and, after smiling and dropping a curtsy, she said that Lord Ethalwood had deputed her to attend upon his granddaughter.

Aveline took this for granted, and did not appear at all astonished.

The wardrobe doors were opened by the obsequious maid-servant, and an extensive assortment of costumes was displayed.

Aveline saw wondrous treasures of satin, silk, and lace dresses that had been sent from Paris; cashmere shawls and mantles of the richest velvet. There was also provided everything necessary in the way of gloves, fans, slippers, etc. Nothing had been forgotten.

Aveline's face grew pale with wonder as she gazed.

"Shall I help you, madam, to dress for dinner?" inquired the maid, and Aveline, with some little trepidation, consented.

The girl had selected a demi-toilet, a dress of rich blue velvet trimmed with white lace. She arranged the wavy masses of light brown hair so as to show its silky abundance, she placed a white camelia in it, and then she opened a jewel case that lay on the table. It contained a suite of pearls, a beautiful necklace, bracelet, and ear-rings.

When her toilette was complete and the last finishing touch had been given by her attentive hand-maiden, Aveline looked at herself in one of the survey glasses which reflected on its face the whole of the figure, and she was perfectly dazzled at her resplendent appearance.

Could it be possible that the lovely, radiant, magnificently dressed woman was the wife of Tom Gatliffe, a poor working man?

The white, graceful neck and exquisitely-moulded shoulders were fair as the soft-gleaming pearls—the rounded arms were perfect in shape as the small white hands.

She smiled to herself.

It seemed hardly possible that she could have been so transformed.

It has been said that beauty unadorned is adorned the most, but it would be in vain to conceal that the most beautiful woman is enhanced by the aid of elegant attire and rendered still more radiant by glittering jewels.

"I wish poor Tom could see me now," she murmured; "he would hardly recognise me. Indeed, to say the truth, I hardly know myself."

She went down to the drawing-room, where the Earl and Mr. Chicknell awaited her.

They both looked up in wonder as the magnificently-attired girl entered the room.

The old lord was profuse in his compliments. He was evidestly proud of his granddaughter's aristocratic appearance.

"She is an ornament to the old walls of Broxbridge," cried the lawyer, "and I congratulate you, my lord, on possessing such a charming companion, whose presence here imparts so much happiness."

Aveline blushed. She was not accustomed as yet to the compliments which fall so glibly from lips of men of good breeding.

She went through the ordeal of dinner with great calmness and self-control.

But there were many things which, in some measure, made her feel uneasy. She had never partaken of a meal of such an elaborate description. The number of courses seemed to bewilder her.

The banquet was served with the greatest care. The services of gold and silver plate, the rare wines, the exotics, and the luxury which seemed to abound everywhere, half startled her.

She took the initiative from her grandfather—she watched what he did, and imitated him.

"She is clever, and can be easily taught. Three months under the careful tuition of some accomplished, high-bred woman," murmured the earl to himself, "and she will be fit for any society."

"I hope and trust you will find yourself so comfortable here," said Mr. Chicknell, addressing himself to the young

lady, "that you will not object to remain for a very long time."

"Ahem! I cannot be made more comfortable. My only fear is that I shall be spoilt," answered Aveline; "and, besides, I must not forget my husband."

The earl held up his hand deprecatingly.

"I must entreat of you not to mention his name," he said quickly. "Pray do not."

Her face flushed with anger; she was about to make some sharp retort, but had the prudence to smother her rising anger, and forbore from making any reply.

Mr. Chicknell adroitly turned the conversation with the tact and address of an accomplished courtier. He engaged the earl's attention upon one or two topics which were favourite ones with him.

The cloud passed over, and the earl took his protégée to the picture gallery. He talked pleasantly to her, and allowed her to see how greatly she was admired by him.

She bowed her head, and clung closer to him.

Something struck her just then that he was a strange, weird kind of man, who seemed to have the power of drawing her closer and closer towards him, until he held her in perfect subjection.

This was but a fugitive thought, but as it passed through her brain she became more reserved in her manner.

"I doubt not but we shall understand each other pretty well," said he; "and I am sure you will do your best to meet my views. I am old, and old age is exacting."

"I will not hear you say so," cried Aveline.

He stooped down, drew her towards him, and kissed her on the cheek.

She passed upstairs to her own suite of rooms, and he returned to the banqueting hall.

Aveline, upon reaching her own rooms, sat down and wrote a long letter to her husband.

In this she described all that had taken place during the

"I WISH POOR TOM COULD SEE ME NOW," SHE MURMURED.

Without ostentation, without boasting, he gave her some faint idea of the glories of the house of Ethalwood. He was well up in the history of his ancestors. He showed her ancient armour that had been worn by the heroes and warriors of his race.

He showed her the pictured faces of men whose voices had ruled the land. He showed her the portraits of ladies whose names had been proverbial for beauty and grace.

"I point out these things to you, my child," said the earl, "so that when I am gathered to my fathers you may keep the remembrance of our ancestors green in your memory; for it has pleased heaven to make known to me that there is yet a living descendant of our long and honourable line, who will, let me hope, wear with credit the honours which, in good time, will be his."

"To whom do you allude, my lord?" said Aveline.

"I cannot refer to any other than your son."

The young girl by his side smiled wanly, but her heart was too full to make any reply.

"We shall have to discourse on this subject on some future day," said he, still in the same measured and melancholy tone and manner he was wont to assume when referring to family matters. "Yes, some other day," he repeated.

day; she informed him also that a grand future was in store for their son, and, furthermore, that she durst not offend the earl, who had requested her to remain for a short period as his guest, and, under the circumstances, it was impossible for her to refuse, and so he must make himself as comfortable as possible during her temporary but unavoidable absence.

Gatliffe, as may be readily imagined, felt lonely during the absence of his wife, for he was not a young man who had at any time sought companionship in the society of those who were frequenters of a public-house.

However, as there did not appear any help for it, he took refuge in the house of Mrs. Maitland, his mother-in-law.

In a few days after her introduction, Aveline Gatliffe began to feel more at home at Broxbridge. She became accustomed to its splendours, to its many charms, to the new and beautiful life that opened to her.

She had always yearned for rank and power, and felt assured that sooner or later she would find herself in a higher sphere. In this, as we have seen, she was not mistaken.

Whether the allurements and follies of fashionable life were destined to bring with them unalloyed happiness she had yet to find out. At present she was well satisfied.

She looked back with wonder at the time she had passed at Sheffield, at Rotherham, and lastly at Wood Green.

How had she borne the quiet seclusion of these places and everything she now valued least? She began to look with contempt upon her past career. Nevertheless, she was not disposed to discard her husband, who, however, appeared at this time a sort of blot on the landscape.

Lord Ethalwood was most careful and adroit in his treatment of her.

He studiously avoided saying anything that she could openly resent, but at the same time he lost no opportunity at sneering at low-bred persons, and in a pointed manner made frequent allusions to men and women of quality, who were so far removed from the commoners.

Class distinctions he believed in like some old feudal lord. He endeavoured to imbue Aveline with the same notions as himself, and it must be admitted that to a considerable extent he succeeded.

The time soon came when, so far from feeling annoyed with him when he was riding his favourite hobby, she coincided with him in his views.

Mr. Chicknell did not attempt to interfere. He saw pretty clearly his client's course of action, and let him carry it out after his own fashion.

"My grandchild will not leave me, Chicknell," said the earl to his lawyer. "I feel assured of that."

"Not leave you? Not return to her husband, my lord?"

"Well, not at present."

"Ah, that's another matter. Not at present, perhaps; but what causes you to arrive at such a conclusion?"

"I will tell you; her master passion is vanity. She is good in every sense of the word, as far as I can judge, but she has more vanity than affection."

"My lord, I trust not."

"Do you? Then I think you will be disappointed. I have known women—women of our own race, too—who would have laughed all wealth to scorn, who would have sacrificed anything, given up their lives, for their love—women of noble nature, who would have trampled all the allurements of wealth under foot, but Aveline is of a lighter nature. I have made a study of her character. Her master passion is vanity."

"I shouldn't have supposed so."

"But it is, Chicknell. She will stay with me because I can administer to her vanity, and her husband cannot. Now do you understand?"

"If it be so I am sorry for it, my lord. But, assuming it is—I will assume you are better informed on the subject than myself—assuming it is, that is no reason for her being so tempted, no reason for her to be estranged from the husband she loves, or did love, I suppose."

"Yes, I believe she did and, indeed, does."

"Well, then, it seems an act of injustice, not to say cruelty, to separate man and wife by any such means."

"It is essential to my happiness—my peace of mind—that this young creature should remain with me—be mine only. I have not many more years to live; but I cannot part with Aveline. You will say I am selfish, perhaps—that does not much concern me; but you will admit, with all your radical notions, that it is not seemly—not consistent with the ordinary usages of society—that a scion of the house of Ethalwood should be mated to a common, low-bred workman. It is, in point of fact, most intolerable."

"It is unfortunate, I admit," said the man of parchment; "but the contract took place before you were even acquainted with your granddaughter, and I do not see very well how it can be rescinded."

"It can be rescinded, and must be!" exclaimed the earl, with sudden vehemence. "Mr. Chicknell, you know what I want."

"Ah—a divorce!"

"That's my meaning. Now you are talking like a sensible man. A divorce—how is it to be effected?"

The lawyer shook his head.

"There is no possible plea for such a course of action. Can't be done."

"It can't?"

"No."

"You must manage it by some means; I will accede to any terms. See this workman; propose a legal separation to him. Offer him what you like; fellows of his nature are always to be had for money. Every man has his price; put the question home to him—say I will agree to settle upon him a large yearly stipend for the remainder of his life, that, furthermore, his son will be heir to the title and estates of Ethalwood, that his wife will be mistress of Broxbridge Hall, and move in the best society. All this is to be done upon one condition—that he consents to a divorce, and does not trouble us any further."

"Ah, this is as you would wish it to be. There is, however, I fear, one insurmountable difficulty in the way. The young engineer loves his wife too much to part with her."

The earl bounced up from his seat in a perfect fury.

"Pshaw!" he ejaculated. "Are you mad, Chicknell? Do you suppose that men of his stamp have any fine feelings? Do you imagine that they would let them—assuming they had such—stand in the way of their own advancement? But that we have to see. All I want you to do is to try. Make the proposition to him. You can do that, I suppose?"

"I can do it, of course; but it is early yet. Besides, what about your granddaughter? If she objects, there is an end of the matter."

"True. Yes, that is true enough. But she won't object after I have made known my wishes."

"Possibly not; but it would not be wise to move in the matter for the present. When the matter is a little more advanced, and you have ascertained that your granddaughter will offer no obstacle, then I will see what I can do with her husband. If he consents to resign her, he is not the man I take him to be; and I must tell you frankly that I do not like the task, which, however, I will perform to the best of my ability."

"She will have to give up her husband, or give up all claims upon me," said Lord Ethalwood. "Understand that most clearly."

"I understand, my lord," returned Mr. Chicknell.

CHAPTER XL.

Charles Peace, who still remained an inmate of Sanderson's Hotel, and enjoyed, if we may so term it, the society of Kempshead, upon returning one evening was a little surprised at beholding, through the glass window of the door which led into the landlady's private room behind the bar, a face which was familiar to him. Mr. Wrench, the astute detective, was in close converse with Mrs. Sanderson. He, however, did not observe our hero, who passed on into one of the public rooms.

Peace thought it a little singular, but said nothing about it to anybody. However, a similar circumstance took place on the following night. As he and Kempshead were passing through the bar Peace saw the back of Mr. Wrench, who, as on the preceding night, was talking to the landlady. He and Kempshead exchanged significant glances as they went upstairs.

"Did you see that chap in the bar parlour?" inquired the latter of Peace.

"I can't make out his little game—is he sticking up to the widow?"

"It is not possible to say, but I should think not," returned Peace.

John Sanderson, the proprietor of the hotel bearing his name, had been dead for some three years, and the business was carried on by his widow, who, to say the truth, had been the presiding genius of the place during her husband's lifetime.

Of late Mr. Wrench had paid such frequent visits to the establishment that many others beside Peace and his friend were under the impression that the detective was paying court to the amiable and comely widow.

In this, however, they were mistaken, as will very shortly be demonstrated. Mr. Wrench only attended professionally, if we may make use of such a term. For a period of many months' duration—for more than a year—a systematic course of robbery had been carried on at the hotel. Money was missed from the till, and the cash-box, silver plate, spirits, wines, table linen—in short, almost every description of portable articles disappeared in a most mysterious and unaccountable manner.

The servants were suspected; one after the other had been discharged; a fresh set of assistants were engaged, still every now and then articles, money, and other property was missing, and, taken in the aggregate, the losses by robbery represented an enormous sum.

Mrs. Sanderson was advised to place the matter in the hands of the police. Mr. Wrench was deputed to clear up the mystery, and, if possible, to trace out the offending party or parties.

He waited upon Mrs. Sanderson, who made him acquainted with all the facts connected with the case.

Mr. Wrench considered the matter over, examined the

premises, listened to the voluble landlady's account of the matter, after which he arrived at one conclusion—it was this, that the robbery was not committed by anyone engaged in the establishment, but by a thief, who, by some means only known to himself and his confederates, effected an entrance into the premises after the household had retired to bed.

Mrs. Sanderson said she could not believe that possible, as all the locks were exactly in the same state in the morning as they were when the household retired for the night.

Mr. Wrench smiled, and said, "Is the outer door bolted when you close?"

"No, it is never bolted," returned the widow; "and for this reason. My regular customers, those who are likely to be late, are supplied with keys, with which they can let themselves in. It is only those who have used the house for a number of years, and who are well known to me, that I entrust with keys, and then it is only on special occasions."

"And these are gentlemen you have full confidence in?"

"Oh, dear me, yes. They are of the highest respectability."

"Ahem!—yes—I dare say," observed the detective. "Knavery is not confined to a class, Mrs. Sanderson."

"My dear sir, you would not for a moment suspect——"

"I do not suspect or accuse anybody," interrupted the detective. "Some person enters the house at night—of that I feel convinced."

"You think so?"

"I do. The question is, how are we to find out the guilty party?"

"That I must leave to you."

This conversation took place in the little room at the back of the bar.

Mr. Wrench rose from his seat and cast his eyes around, then he walked into the bar itself and glanced at an article of furniture which in shape and size very much resembled a large wardrobe.

"What is that, Mrs. Sanderson?" he inquired, pointing to the article in question.

"Oh, that is a large press, or cabinet, which my husband had made for the purpose of stowing away plate, linen, and other articles."

"Ah! I see; it has folding-doors. Can I open them?"

"Yes, if you like; here is the key."

The detective opened the doors, and found that the cabinet had three large shelves, which ran from side to side.

"We must remove these," he said, turning towards the landlady; "then there will be room enough."

"For what?"

"For me to take up my position for the night. I shall want a small stool to sit upon, and a few holes bored at the top for the admission of air."

"Take up your position there, Mr. Wrench!—what for?"

"To watch and wait patiently till my gentleman arrives," returned the detective, with the utmost composure.

The widow was astonished.

"But you'll be stifled!" cried she.

"I hope not," he observed, with a laugh; "as in that case my man will have it all his own way. Now, you must not, upon any consideration, say a word to anyone about my plan of action; secrecy, in matters of this sort, is the very first consideration. The shelves must be removed, and holes bored at the top. This will have to be done by a man in our employ."

The widow nodded.

On the following morning a workman was sent by Mr. Wrench, who removed the shelves and made all the other necessary preparations.

In the evening, the detective crept into the press, and found it sufficiently commodious for his accommodation. He was a little cramped, it is true, or would be so, after a sojourn therein of some hours' duration; but this inconvenience he felt bound to submit to in the exercise of his vocation.

A small stool was placed inside the cabinet, the doors of which were then closed and locked by Wrench.

So far matters were satisfactorily arranged.

The reader should be apprised that what we are about to describe is a narrative of an actual occurrence, which is, in every way, true, even to the minutest detail.

On the succeeding night the thief-catcher was prepared to take up his station in his narrow prison-house. He remained conversing with the landlady in her little bar parlour till all the household had retired to bed.

As a natural consequence the impression now became pretty general that he was an accepted suitor of the widow, and neither he nor the lady took the trouble to contradict it.

When the house was quiet, and no one any longer visible, Mr. Wrench unlocked the folding doors, and, like the Davenport Brothers, entered his cabinet, taking care at the same time to lock himself therein.

The gas was turned off, and Mrs. Sanderson retired to bed.

Mr. Wrench kept watch and ward.

In one of the doors in front of him two narrow slits had been made. These were sufficiently large for him to observe the actions of anyone behind the bar, while at the same time they were so constructed as not to admit of anyone seeing him.

In fact he was in Cimmerian darkness which no human eye could pierce.

The hours wore slowly on with our detective. His situation was by no means an enviable one. His position was cramped, and his small prison-house was cheerless and lonely; but detectives have to submit to every kind of inconvenience, and Mr. Wrench did not murmur.

The night wore on—as it waned the hall clock of the establishment struck hour after hour, but no burglar or robber disturbed the unbroken stillness of the hostelry.

Before any of the household was astir Mr. Wrench crept out of his cabinet, opened the front door of the house with the key the landlady had given him, and made the best of his way to his own residence, where he snatched a few hours of welcome and refreshing sleep.

His first night's purgatory had been attended with no good result.

Again, as on the previous night, Mr. Wrench betook himself to his sentry-box, where he again passed many cheerless hours, with no better result.

He left at daybreak, and made his appearance at the hotel a little before closing time.

"He is a most devoted and punctual lover," said one of the chambermaids to the cook. "I call him a model man."

"An' ain't he good-looking? He's a little too good for missus. What's his business?"

"Something in the City, I believe." This answer was given at random—something in the City is such an indefinite term.

Mr. Wrench again took up his position.

For eight consecutive nights he went through the same formula.

He was getting a little tired of the painful monotony of his task, which, up to the present time, had been a thankless and fruitless one.

On the ninth night, about half-past two o'clock in the morning, which, to say the truth, sounds a good deal like a bull, for how can it be night if it is morning? But, of course, the reader will understand we are speaking figuratively.

About half-past two, or it might be a little later, Mr. Wrench pricked up his ears. He heard the sound of a key turning the lock of what he supposed to be the outer door. He was assured of this upon hearing the door gently closed.

Then soft footsteps were audible in the passage, and the little flap of the counter was thrown back. A man passed through and came behind the bar; then all was silent for the space of a few seconds.

Mr. Wrench was on the tiptoe of expectation.

The bird was coming into the net.

The striking of a lucifer was the next thing he heard. One gas-burner was ignited; it burnt very feebly as the strange visitor had only partially turned it on; nevertheless, there was sufficient light for Mr. Wrench to observe the actions of his man through the slits of his sentry box, for he felt perfectly assured that it was his man.

The detective was too practised a hand to emerge from his place of temporary concealment. He must make sure before he pounced upon his prey.

The man drew from his pocket a bunch of keys. With one of these he opened the till, and, gathering up its contents, he slid the loose coins, gold and silver mingled together, into a canvas bag; this he placed in a small carpet bag which he had already deposited on the counter.

After this he went to the plate basket and abstracted therefrom several spoons and forks. He seemed to have a perfect knowledge of the place, and evidently understood where everything was kept.

He laid hold of a bottle of the best French brandy, and regaled himself with a couple of glasses from the same. This done, he put the bottle, with two others, in his carpet bag, having previously wrapped the bottles in some napkins he found in a drawer.

He now proceeded to open the cash-box. In this were several Bank of England notes; these, like the other articles, were thrust into the carpet bag.

Mr. Wrench, with his hand on the key in the lock of his folding doors, was watching the robber with intense interest.

He was preparing to make a sudden spring, but as the robber was engaged in unlocking drawer after drawer for the purpose of obtaining further booty, the detective thought it would be just as well to let him have his full swing.

On one of the shelves was a box of cigars; the thief took a couple of handfuls of these, which he pocketed.

After this had been done he turned round and took hold of one of the decanters containing wine. He poured out a glass of this, and while he was conveying it to his lips the doors of the cabinet were suddenly thrown open.

Mr. Wrench rushed forth, and, with one panther-like bound, grasped him by the throat with both hands.

The swiftness and suddenness of the attack was perfectly electrical.

The robber trembled like an aspen bough shaken by the blast. His knees gave way, and he would most certainly have fallen had he not been held up by Mr. Wrench.

His countenance was of an ashen hue.

"So, my man," cried the detective, "you're caught at last. I've been watching for you for a long time."

"Let me go!" cried the burglar, endeavouring to release himself.

"Look here," said Wrench, "it's no use your endeavouring to get away, or make any row. You are my prisoner."

"I ain't got the strength of a blessed hinfant!" cried the robber. "I'm done as dead as a hammer, but don't put the darbies on a cove."

"I certainly shall," returned the detective, slipping on the handcuffs with admirable adroitness.

"S'help my tater, I am done brown this time, and no mistake!"

The detective turned up the gas and rang the bell violently. Mrs. Sanderson was aroused from her slumbers. She hurried on her things, and hastened to the scene of action.

"We've caught him, madam; I knew we should," said Wrench, when the landlady made her appearance. "You had better go to Marlborough Street with me, and charge him."

"Oh, you scoundrel!" exclaimed Mrs. Sanderson, addressing herself to the prisoner. "It's you, eh?"

"Do you know him?" inquired the officer.

"Yes; he was boots here for a short time—about two years ago. Oh, the base, infamous man!"

"Lay it all on me," cried the prisoner. "In course, when a cove's down, kick him. Oh, lay it all on me; but I ain't so much to blame. Let me off, missus, and I'll tell ye all about it."

"Don't have anything to say to him, madam," said the detective, "but follow us to Marlborough Street as soon as possible."

Peace, who had heard the commotion, emerged from his bedroom half-dressed, and looked over the banister.

He was met by Mrs. Sanderson, who was returning to her room to put on her bonnet and shawl.

"What's the matter?" inquired Peace of the landlady.

"We've caught a burglar, and I have to go and prefer the charge against him," answered his hostess, as she passed into her sleeping apartment.

Our hero's curiosity was aroused. He had another look over the banisters, and beheld Mr. Wrench, whom he knew well enough, in charge of a handcuffed man, who was his prisoner.

Peace drew back. "Cooney!" he ejaculated. "Well this is most astonishing!"

It was true enough. The robber was indeed "Cooney," whom doubtless the reader will remember as being concerned with Peace and the Bristol Badger in the burglary at Oakfield farmhouse, described in the opening chapters of this work.

Peace deemed it advisable to retire to his own apartment. He did not care to claim acquaintance with the robber. As it was, he had escaped recognition by the merest accident.

"I shall have to fight shy in this case. Cooney is nabbed, and will have to take his chance," he mused, when he had gained his own room.

The burglar was marched off to Marlborough Street. Soon after his arrival there Mrs. Sanderson presented herself.

It was impossible for any case to be clearer. The particulars were entered into the charge-sheet, and the prosecutrix was told by the inspector to be at Marlborough Street in the forenoon.

Mr. Wrench had safely bagged his bird.

When the case came before the magistrate it transpired that Cooney had a confederate.

A man who had held a situation as head-waiter at the hotel had planned and contrived the series of artful robberies which had been so successfully carried out, during the period of a little more than a year.

He had provided himself with duplicate keys of all the locks in the house, the interior of which he was very well acquainted with.

Cooney, who had throughout his life always taken a subordinate part in the various depredations in which he had been engaged, had consented to become the tool of the head-waiter.

The case against the prisoner was as clear as it well could be.

Mr. Wrench's evidence was more than enough to ensure a conviction.

So convinced was the robber of this that he pleaded guilty, and threw himself upon the mercy of the court.

He was told by the detectives that if he chose to give up the names of his accomplices he would be dealt with more leniently and receive a lighter sentence.

He said that he had but one accomplice, this being the head-waiter whom he named.

In the course of a few days the latter was hunted down and taken into custody. He was convicted, and sentenced to five years' penal servitude, for a considerable portion of the property previously stolen from the hotel was found in his possession.

Cooney was let off cheap; he had one year's imprisonment, with hard labour. And so ended the robbery at Sanderson's Hotel.

CHAPTER XLI.

Our hero, as we have already seen, had been leading for a long time past a reputable sort of life—indeed, the company into which he had fallen at Broxbridge had caused him to turn his thoughts in another direction. Had he remained there it is just possible that he might have abstained from the pursuit of dishonest courses.

But now the spell was broken.

His funds were at a low ebb, and he did not feel disposed to leave London empty-handed. He must levy blackmail on the inhabitants of so wealthy a city.

He reasoned with himself in a self-satisfactory way, never for a moment acknowledging that he was in any way a wrong-doer.

Indeed, the sophistry and hypocrisy of Peace was one of his most marked characteristics, and the examination of the character of such a man is a curious study.

Practical he was to a certain extent, but his habituation to crime was voluntary and wilful. He chose his walk in life, and determined not to stop short of the most distinguished excellence. His daring dexterity and self-possession would have made for him a splendid career in any walk of life where his "imperial" customs could have been legitimised by authority.

Then, after robbing and murdering half the world, he might have grasped the highest honours of a peerage, and died in the perfect odour of sanctity. Peace had just that laxity of moral nature which would have made him a thoroughly unscrupulous instrument in the hands of a lawless power.

But he lacked the golden opportunity, and became instead a desperate criminal. The arrest, trial, and conviction of Cooney and his confederate had no other effect upon Peace than causing him to give up all idea of remaining longer in Sanderson's Hotel.

He had narrowly escaped recognition. At present he stood well with Mr. Wrench, and naturally enough he had no desire for the astute detective to be enlightened as to his antecedents or real character.

It was, therefore, necessary for him to be cautious.

He had a large amount of material connected with his business, consisting chiefly of frames, prints, and tools, which had been packed up, and were still at the goods department at the London station, and he had still many commissions to execute.

He took two unfurnished rooms in the neighbourhood of Leather Lane, Holborn, and had his stock-in-trade removed to his new lodgings.

One room he proposed using as a workshop, the other he could make occasional use of as a dormitory.

His newly-found friend, Kempshead, had left London upon a tour to some of the leading towns in the capacity of a commercial traveller; he had, therefore, nothing to regret in leaving Sanderson's, so he paid his bill, and moved to his new quarters.

He had thoughts of returning to his native town, Shef-

field, but as yet London had many allurements for him, and he was loth to leave it

He set to work in his new quarters, and sent some frames and prints to some of his customers at Broxbridge, but the spirit of adventure which had lain so long dormant now asserted its sway, and he began to make nocturnal excursions, and returned with the booty to his bare and gaunt-looking apartments, which were, however, in a short space of time pretty well stocked with the proceeds of his various robberies.

Having recommenced this dishonest career of life, he carried on his depredations with the greatest assiduity.

The burglaries he had carried out so successfully were chiefly confined to the north side of London. He had noticed during his excursions a large red brick mansion at Highgate, standing back from the road, with an avenue of gigantic trees in its front. It was a fine specimen of an old manorial edifice, and had in all probability been originally built by some nobleman or rich commoner. It had been repaired and beautified, and was now known by circulars and advertisements as "Miss Chickleberry's Finishing Academy for Young Ladies."

Peace thought it worthy of a visit, so one moonlight night he bent his steps in the direction of Highgate.

At this time there were not many pedestrians or equestrians passing along the road even in broad daylight. At night there were none, and the burglar, therefore, felt assured that he should have it pretty well his own way.

Two large wrought-iron gates guarded the entrance to the broad gravel walk which led to the vestibule of the house. Not a light of any description was discernible at the windows of the habitation. Peace scaled the wall, and then found himself in the front garden or shrubbery. He crept silently along until he reached the side of the mansion; passing along this he arrived at the garden in its rear.

It was at the back of Miss Chickleberry's residence that he proposed effecting an entrance, for beyond the garden itself were a number of fields used for grazing purposes.

A death-like silence reigned around, which was only broken occasionally by the mournful sighing of the branches of the trees as they were agitated by a passing breeze. He concluded that all the inmates were fast asleep—at any rate he hoped they were.

He had provided himself with a capacious bag, as he had been given to understand that there was a considerable amount of silver plate, which he concluded it would be his pleasing duty to remove. Two men-servants slept in the rooms over some stables, which were about a hundred and fifty yards from the house, which, with the exception of a boy who acted as page, was occupied by females only. But, Peace being a ladies' man, this did not much matter.

The most serious matter for consideration was how to effect an entrance without disturbing the sleeping garrison. Our hero had turned his attention to this long before the night of the proposed burglary. The schoolroom appeared to be the weakest point of attack.

It jutted out from the house itself, and was fastened most insecurely—doubtless it had been originally a ballroom in the days when the habitation boasted of liberal occupants.

THE SWIFTNESS OF THE ATTACK WAS ELECTRICAL.

Anyhow, it was most alluring to the eyes of our burglar. At its end was a bay window with lozenge-shaped panes set in lead.

Peace found but little difficulty in removing one of these; but the room was secured by shutters, which were, however, old and rickety; but, nevertheless, they were not so easily opened as he had at first supposed. They resisted all his efforts.

There was no other way left but to bore some holes with his centre-bit, and then to remove a portion of the panel. This he proceeded to do without further delay, of course performing the operation as noiselessly as possible. In a short time a portion of the panel was removed. He then put his hand through the aperture and lifted up the bar of the shutter. He then unfastened the window and gained an entrance into the schoolroom.

All this had been done without anyone being aroused.

The burglar then paused for a brief space of time, and bethought him of his next proceedings. He had coloured his face, and otherwise disfigured himself, in accordance with his custom when engaged in marauding expeditions of this nature. He slid over his boots a pair of list slippers, and crept noiselessly into the passage. At the end of this was

the reception-room, where the parents of the young ladies were shown into the presence of the mistress of the establishment.

On the table of the reception-room several pieces of plate were ostentatiously displayed, which had been from time to time presented to Miss Chickleberry, either by the parents of her scholars or by the pupils themselves. They, of course, had a most imposing appearance, and did not escape the eye of the burglar, who at once transferred them to his bag. In addition to these he possessed himself of an ormolu clock and several other articles of value.

He could have now returned from the scene of his depredations with a large booty, without running any further risk, but he was not a man so easily satisfied.

He was bent upon going into the other rooms of the house, and it would appear the greater the risk the greater was the charm to him.

Placing his half-filled bag on one of the desks in the schoolroom, he crept softly upstairs. Not a sound, save from his own movements, broke the stillness of the night.

He entered one of the upstair rooms. This was a prodigiously large apartment. In it were a number of beds, which were occupied by Miss Chickleberry's scholars.

Peace was quite enraptured with the galaxy of sleeping beauties which suddenly met his view.

Young ladies, ranging from the ages of twelve to sixteen, were peacefully slumbering in the grand old bedchamber. Some of them were of a rare order of beauty, but all looked so calm, so gentle, and so innocent, that even the callous heart of the burglar was touched.

Our hero was an admirer of beauty, especially when it referred to the opposite sex to his own; but it would not do to fall into a reverie over the display of fascinating creatures before him.

He observed several gold watches on the little tables beside the beds, and to gather these up was the first consideration. He went to the first table, took the watch from its stand, and slid it into his pocket.

Then he crept on to the next and possessed himself of that, and so on till he had ten or a dozen watches in his pocket.

Having effected this he turned round and made for the door. Just as he was about reaching this he was astounded at beholding the large round eyes of a young girl of about eleven or twelve gazing full into his own.

She did not utter a word or even attempt to move.

As he passed her bed she murmured "Oh!" in almost a whisper

Peace concluded, naturally enough, that she was paralysed by fear. That she was awake he knew perfectly well, for her eyes were fixed intently on him.

He went to the side of her bed, and said, in a whisper:

"My girl, if you stir or move or endeavour to give the slightest alarm your life will be forfeited. Do you understand?"

He drew forth his revolver, and pointed significantly to the barrel.

"Say nothing, keep quiet, and you are safe."

The girl nodded, but made no other answer.

"Remember!" whispered Peace, as he passed through the door, "as you value your life, keep silent."

He passed into the passage, closing the door of the young ladies' dormitory gently as he did so.

At the farther end of the passage or landing was a door. This was suddenly opened, and a tall, angular, severe-looking lady presented herself.

This was Miss Chickleberry herself.

The moment she caught sight of the burglar she gave utterance to a piercing scream. She flew back into her bedroom, still screaming and calling loudly for assistance.

"Silence, woman!" exclaimed our hero, entering her bedchamber without ceremony. "Are you mad, to make all this row and clatter for nothing?"

"For nothing!" cried Miss Chickleberry. "Oh! you monster! Help! Murder! Robbers!"

"Will you hold your cursed tongue?" exclaimed Peace, now seriously alarmed. "If you don't——"

He produced his revolver.

At this the schoolmistress became perfectly frantic.

It was in vain that he pointed the muzzle of the pistol to her temple and threatened to take her life.

She would not be pacified.

He had no desire to shoot her, but she must be silenced. He placed his hand over her mouth to stifle her cries.

She struggled desperately, and was very nearly releasing herself from his grasp.

He lost his temper, and struck her on the head with his clenched fist.

"She'll arouse the whole neighbourhood," he murmured. "There never was such a dragon."

He caught sight of a cake of glycerine soap on the wash-stand. He thrust this into her mouth, then tied her hands behind her with a handkerchief.

His impression was that after this she fainted, but he did not stop to ascertain. Taking the key out of the lock of her door, he locked her in from the outside.

A chorus of screams now proceeded from the young ladies' dormitory. Several by this time had rushed out into the passage in their night-dresses, with naked feet, on the cold floor of the landing.

"Back—back into your rooms, girls!" cried Peace, in an authoritative tone. "You've no occasion to be alarmed. No harm is intended."

"But Miss Chickleberry. What of her?" cried one of the pupils.

"She's all right, quite right," answered Peace, flying down the stairs with headlong speed.

Upon reaching the schoolroom he snatched up his bag and fled from the house. He jumped over the back garden wall, gained the meadow beyond, and made for a wood which was at no very great distance. In endeavouring to reach this he ran into the arms of a policeman.

"Unhand me, fellow," he ejaculated. "If you don't, it will be the worse for you. Leave go, I say."

"You are my prisoner," said the constable.

"Prisoner be hanged! What for? I haven't done anything. Nobody has charged me. You are exceeding your duty."

"And I will; I'll take my chance of that."

Peace made a desperate effort to slip from the constable's grasp, and a struggle ensued, in which both fell. But the officer, who was bent upon doing his duty, still retained hold of the robber, who kicked and fought like a madman.

He was unable to draw his revolver; had he been able to do so the chances were that he would have shot the policeman without pity or remorse. He managed to regain his feet, to be again thrown down by the constable, who placed his knee on his chest and endeavoured to slip on the handcuffs.

Peace, however, managed to frustrate this attempt, whereupon his antagonist drew his staff, and said he would make use of it if he offered further opposition.

Our hero now felt that he was at the mercy of his captor, and ground his teeth in rage and despair.

"Take your knee from off me, and I will do as you wish, and go with you quietly," cried Peace, who thought it best to temporise, and see if any other chance of escape presented itself.

He was perfectly astounded in another moment at hearing a voice exclaim:

"Let the man alone, you brute!"

A terrible blow was delivered from behind, with some weapon, on the head of the policeman, who was laid prostrate.

His helmet had fallen off in the struggle with Peace, and the blow, therefore, was more effective.

The policeman was evidently partially, if not wholly, stunned.

"Fly—fly! This way!" exclaimed the same voice as he had heard before. "The bobby is knocked out of time—follow me."

The speaker led the way into the wood, and Peace followed, bag in hand.

"Now, old man, sharp's the word," cried the same voice. "There'll be a rare hue and cry presently. Keep along this beaten pathway; that's it."

They passed through the wood, and arrived at a narrow lane full of ruts.

In this was a horse and cart.

"Jump in, old man," cried the stranger.

Peace jumped into the cart—his companion did the same, and drove off at a sharp trot.

"Well, hang me if I'm not knocked silly," cried out hero, "why, if it ain't Bandy-legged Bill."

"Right you are, my child," returned the gipsy, "one good turn deserves another. You let me off the Carved Lion business; I've just come up in time to return the compliment."

"How came you on the spot?"

(To be continued.)

Rigaudier,

A TRAGIC TALE OF LOVE and VENGEANCE and of WOMAN'S CONSTANCY.

"All the travail, all the weeping,
Here is laid to rest;
Love that bound them,
Love that crowned them,
Takes them to his breast."
—ANON., "The Dead Lovers."

PART I.

IN the early part of the year 1825 a traveller inquired of some peasants how long it would take him to reach the French hamlet of Cartelmassin.

"About an hour and a-half, if you walk," was the reply.

"I thank you. I shall walk on in the hope of meeting a vehicle, or being overtaken by one myself."

"Do you know your road, stranger?" asked the peasants.

"Every inch of it."

The traveller, a young man of about thirty years of age, gave the peasants a parting salute, and marched on his way.

The people he had spoken to turned round and looked after him until he disappeared in the distance. None of them remembered to have seen the young man before, and yet he claimed to be familiar with their native village.

If, however, they had beheld the traveller by daylight they would have recognised in his bronzed, weather-beaten countenance the face of young Denis Rigaudier, who ran away from Cartelmassin five years previously, with the intent of making his fame and fortune.

Denis had only partially succeeded in his ambitious design. He had made the fortune—or what he thought was such—without the fame. He trudged along the snow-encumbered road, a staff in his hand and a knapsack on his back.

The snow had been falling so heavily the last few days that the roads were nigh impassable, and post-chaises were at a premium. It is not surprising, then, that the pedestrian traveller, after some little time, overtook a clumsy-looking cart, which was crawling laboriously along the ruts left by other vehicles in the half-frozen snow.

"You don't seem to be making much progress, friend," shouted Denis Rigaudier, as he came up with the sweltering cart-horses.

The driver of the cart had evidently fallen asleep; he was bending forward, his chin resting on his chest, with the reins grasped loosely in his right hand. Rigaudier's salutation aroused him. He woke up with a start and an exclamation, and at once regained his wits.

He was a man well over middle-age, clad in peasant's garb, with a sallow, wizened complexion, broken teeth, deep, ferret-like eyes, and long grey hair, that hung in lank locks on his drooping shoulders.

"Keep off!" he cried in frightened, querulous accents to Rigaudier. "Keep off, whoever you be; keep off, I say, or you'll get an ounce of lead in you!"

Rigaudier laughed.

"My good Bertrand, you grow suspicious in your old age," he said.

The man in the cart started, put his hand over his eyes, and peered curiously at the stranger.

"Who are you?" he asked. "I don't know you. You do not live in Cartelmassin, and yet you know my name."

"Bring the lamp nearer my face, and look well," said Rigaudier.

The man in the cart complied, after some hesitation.

"Mon Dieu! it is Denis Rigaudier!" he cried in amazement.

"Perhaps, neighbour, seeing that I am an old friend and quite harmless, you will not object to my seating myself beside you? It is dull work walking without company."

"Yes, yes; you may come up, Denis," answered Bertrand, "though the cart be overloaded as it is now."

The young traveller accepted this doubtful invitation, and sprang on the seat of the vehicle beside his companion.

"Now, tell me the news, Bertrand. I'll take the reins. Let me hear of the old village's progress."

"First of all, Denis, what of you? How has the world treated you?"

"So well, my friend, that I have not the heart to grumble. I have a nice little account safe in the bank in Paris."

Bertrand's demeanour towards Denis improved immediately upon this information. He at once felt an affection for his young friend rise up within his miserly heart.

"And now," asked Rigaudier, "what news of Cartelmassin?"

"Little enough—little enough," croaked Bertrand. "We do not make fortunes like you travellers. We are content to stay at home and put up with little."

Rigaudier asked questions concerning many of the people with whom he had been acquainted at home, and finally, after much circumlocution, veered round to the point nearest his heart: How was Amabel Risset?

"Well, very well," replied Chevalier Bertrand, in a quick, uneasy voice, and changed the subject of conversation forthwith. They were now nearing Cartelmassin itself. The lights of the little village burned dimly in the distance. The tears came into Rigaudier's eyes as he saw one after another well-remembered objects emerge from the darkness; Marchout's cottage; the pump with the broken handle, that nobody had ever thought of mending; the village inn, with the red blinds drawn over the parlour windows; the cobble stones of the one street. All were to Rigaudier old friends, dear with hallowed associations, familiar with undying memories of boyhood and early youth.

At the door of the inn Rigaudier descended lightly from Bertrand's cart, waved the old man good night, and entered the doors of Cartelmassin's one hostelry.

Rigaudier had not a living relation in the world. His father had perished on the plains of Waterloo, his mother had died soon afterwards, and he was the only child.

There had been another little orphan in Cartelmassin, a girl of the name of Amabel Risset, who had been taken care of by Denis's mother until her death. The two children had grown up together, had played together, worked together, and, when assailed by the slight sorrows that beset childhood, had found comfort in one another's arms. It was but natural, then, that when childhood changed to youth they should have looked on one another with eyes that spoke rapturously of love. Each thought the other was the most wonderful creature the world had ever seen.

Around Amabel the boy had woven all his most precious dreams, had spun the most delicate threads of romance, and out of his love for her had evolved a purer, nobler self, a being possessed of greater ideals and loftier aspirations than the Rigaudier of boyhood, the merry imp, with the blind heart, who loved mischief, and nothing else.

When, on the death of his mother, Denis found himself alone in the world, with little means of subsistence and none of bettering his fortune, and with the added responsibility of Amabel's future resting on his young shoulders, the young man determined on a bold throw of destiny's disc.

He sold the tiny farm, with all articles of furniture, and handed the money to Amabel. He then sought out a benevolent lady of his acquaintance, entrusted Amabel to her care and guardianship, and forthwith went to sea, to make a fortune, with which to return and marry Amabel Risset.

The folly of youth! Yes, folly, if you will, but splendid folly, for all that, the epic insanity that occasionally rises to heights of success, the achievement of its fondest adventures, the crowning of most, if not all, its hopes. Well, so far had Rigaudier succeeded that he had acquired by hard device and desperate energy a considerable sum of money, and he had once more reached the home of his boyhood, the sanctuary where dwelt the dear saint of his heart.

It will be remembered that we left him entering the inn at Cartelmassin, where, for the present, he proposed to take up his quarters.

A large gathering of village wits and celebrities were, as usual, ensconced in the parlour. Rigaudier, on his entrance, was received at first with the suspicious silence that always greeted a stranger. But when he took off his hat, took old Madame Labourdet in his arms, kissed her, and asked her if she had quite forgotten her little Denis, such a roar of welcome resounded through the house as had not been heard there for many a long day.

Rigaudier was assailed with a thousand questions, plied with drink, and provided with supper, for all of which he was not allowed to pay a sou.

It was late that night when the last of the village cronies had departed finally and left old Labourdet and his worthy lady to recount to their guest all the news of Cartelmassin and the neighbourhood.

Madame Labourdet herself seemed rather subdued; she was conspicuously kind and gracious in all she said to Denis, but still there appeared to be some secret lurking at the back of her mind which would not allow her to indulge freely in joyous spirits. Old Labourdet himself, too, smoked his pipe silently, and occasionally kept looking over to his wife in an uneasy, evasive manner, as much as to say, "Out with it; you must tell him, for I cannot."

After some general chat about commonplace matters,

"Tell me everything you know."

Denis rose from his chair and went over to where Madame Labourdet sat quietly knitting.

"Mother," said he, putting his hand on her shoulder, "for it is as such that I always think of you—mother, you know the question that is on my lips, that springs from my heart. How is Amabel?"

"She is well," answered Madame Labourdet shortly.

"Ah! do not answer me like that! I am dying to know all about her. Tell me everything; you know she is going to be my wife."

The young man's passionate accents wrung the old woman's heart.

"Shall I tell him?" she said, with a pained, expressive look at her husband. Labourdet nodded, and quietly slipped out of the room.

The pith of Madame Labourdet's story, stripped of its many tearful, but albeit sincere adornments, was as follows:

Amabel Risset had been left by Rigaudier in the charge of a certain Madame De Beloine, a lady of exalted lineage, whose family had been destroyed, and whose fortune had been confiscated thirty years beforehand by the revolutionaries in the Reign of Terror. It appears that a year after Rigaudier had left Cartelmassin, Madame De Beloine experienced a sudden seizure, and expired before medical assistance could be summoned. Amabel was thus left without a protectress.

The next thing that was known was that she had married no other than the old miser, Chevalier Bertrand.

In her new situation it was thought the girl was far from being happy.

This was the glad news that greeted Denis Rigaudier on his home-coming!

The young man was at first too dazed and stunned to cry out against fortune. For some time he seemed literally turned to stone; his face was grey, and curiously old, his lips were livid, and his eyes half closed. He sat for over an hour like this, alone, for the Labourdets had judged it wise to leave him with his sorrows.

Slowly, great scalding tears grew in his eyes, and trickled down his hardy cheeks.

And so he seemed to revivify into life, all hauteur, all natural pride vanished from him; he covered his face with his hands and wept aloud. When the first rush of grief had subsided, and he tried to regard the facts of the matter with a clear and unbiassed mind, he was obliged to admit that the whole affair passed all reasonable comprehension.

Amabel married to old Bertrand!

It seemed a profanation to think of such a thing. A young, good, and beautiful girl yoked for life to an old, decrepit, sour-minded miser!

Surely it was impossible—surely there must be some great mistake. And yet, argue as he would, Rigaudier was forced to admit that he was awake, and not dreaming, that the story had been imparted to him by Madame Labourdet, and that what Madame Labourdet said was truth.

He had driven into Cartelmassin the previous evening with old Bertrand, had inquired of him as to Amabel's well-being, and had received a favourable reply. Why did not Bertrand acquaint him with the truth? Was he afraid to? Perhaps so.

Why had Amabel chosen of all people the senile and loathsome miller for a husband. Such were the questions he asked himself, and to which he could find no possible answer.

At first a cowardly inclination came over him to take up his knapsack and steal away in the darkness from his native village, never to visit it again. But his better nature soon overcame this momentary cravenness, and he determined to see Amabel at the earliest opportunity, and to learn the truth from her own lips.

He went to his room, laid down upon the little bed, and watched with aching eyes the saffron-hued dawn steal gradually through the lattice window.

Never to his thinking had dawn shone so coldly and so drear.

He left his breakfast untouched, and went out almost immediately to visit miller Bertrand and his wife.

"Do you see, Labourdet, in which direction our young friend has gone?" said Marchout, who had called in for an early glass of wine. "He is making for the Bertrands. Ah! me, now we shall have a fine comedy."

"A tragedy, you mean," replied Labourdet.

Rigaudier marched briskly up the road until he came in sight of the miller's house.

The old man was working in his garden, which he turned, like most things that came to his hand, to considerable account. He saw Rigaudier coming, and called out, in his horrible cracked voice, "Here he comes, Amabel, your fine sailor chap, back from over the seas."

No answer came from the house. Rigaudier came up, and accosted Bertrand politely enough.

"Pleased to see you, Denis; pleased, I'm sure," answered the miller, grinning in a manner which he intended to be pleasant, but which in reality, seeing that it disclosed to view his broken teeth and discoloured gums, was the very antithesis to an agreeable smile.

"Why did you not tell me last night that you had married Amabel Risset?" asked Rigaudier, in his straightforward sailor fashion, leaning his arms leisurely over the gate, and gazing earnestly into Bertrand's face.

"Didn't I tell you? To be sure I didn't, now. Well, I like to give my friends a little surprise. It's a way I've got."

"Where is Amabel?" asked Denis, ignoring the old man's hideous jocularity.

"Madame Chevalier Bertrand is within. Do you wish to see her? I will call her out."

"I should like to see her very much."

"All right."

Bertrand put down his spade, and turning towards the house, halloed in a loud voice:

"Come out, wife; friend Rigaudier wants you."

There was no answer.

"Come out at once, damn you!" shrieked Bertrand, his face growing green with rage at his wife's disobedience.

Still there came no answer.

"I'll skin you alive for this, see if I don't!" yelled Bertrand, and hobbled into the house with the agility of a frog.

Rigaudier seemed metamorphosed by wonder into stone. He did not move nor speak, but leant on the gate like an immovable statue. And this was the husband Amabel had chosen! This embodiment of all senility in its most loathsome form, who spoke to her as if she were a dog, and threatened to treat her worse.

"AIN'T YE GOT NOTHING TO SAY TO OUR FRIEND?"

Denis did not have long to indulge in reflections, for the door of the house opened, and Bertrand came out in the company of—Amabel!

"Good God!" thought the young man, "and can this be the girl whom I left in beauty and innocence, a veritable child of the springtime—this bowed, careworn, bedraggled creature?"

She walked beside Bertrand, her whole attitude one of meek submission. She wore heavy boots, a short, stained petticoat, a loose, discoloured blouse, open at the neck, and her glorious, red-gold hair, caught in a loose knot behind her head, hung in untidy abundance around her pale, pinched face.

Her eyes, which were red with recent weeping, she kept downcast, and her hands were hidden beneath a coarse apron that was tied round her waist.

Denis noticed that she wore no stays, that there were the traces of tears on her sunken cheeks, and that her whole appearance was dirty and slovenly. She seemed to have aged in an extraordinary manner since he last saw her; there were lines round her mouth, and great blue rings encircled her once lustrous eyes. She looked like a child that in some way has grown unnaturally old, whilst still maintaining something of its discarded youth.

"Well, wife, ain't you got nothing to say to our friend after all these years?" said Bertrand, who stood watching the meeting of Amabel and Rigaudier, regarding them with a curious expression, that alternated between a malignant scowl and a jocose grin.

Amabel gave a timid little half-look up into Bertrand's face, and, seeing that he wished her to speak, said, "I am glad to see you again, friend Rigaudier," in the manner of a child repeating a lesson.

"I, too, am glad to see Amabel," replied Denis, in a voice that quivered with emotion. "I have thought of you often. I am pleased to find you married."

"Do you hear that, wife? He is pleased to find you married," chimed in Bertrand, in high glee at the young people's discomfiture.

"I am very happy," answered Amabel, and burst into tears.

"What's that for, I should like to know?" cried Bertrand in a great rage, all the pleasantry vanishing from his face. "Get inside, and hurry up with your work."

The girl slunk indoors with the look of a whipped animal.

"As for you," cried Bertrand, turning fiercely on Rigaudier, "be off with you at once! Who told you to come here and upset my family?"

"Take care," said Denis sternly; "do not rely too much on your grey hairs. I might be tempted to thrash you yet."

A frightened look came into the old man's face. He hobbled in after Amabel, and shut the door with a bang.

Denis was in a dilemma. He wished to force open the

door of Bertrand's dwelling and thrash the senile villain who persecuted the girl he had once loved.

But, although his natural inclinations urged him on to such a course of procedure, wisdom came to his aid, represented to him the folly of such conduct, and his inability to better Amabel's condition by falling in wrath on her husband.

Her husband! It still seemed to Rigaudier a fact barely believable. Never were a couple more unnaturally matched, and, from what he could see, never was there a wife more miserable than Amabel. The whole affair was still a mystery to Denis. His visit had been provocative of no good, and had left him as ignorant as ever of the cause which had originally forced Amabel Risset into the lean arms of Chevalier Bertrand.

He wandered back to the inn disconsolate and weary at heart. He sat in the parlour the greater part of the day, thinking and brooding over this amazing marriage, and wondering how it would be possible to obtain a private interview with Amabel, when from her lips he could learn the truth of the strange matter. His meditations were interrupted by a round, chubby face being poked through the door, and withdrawn again, every three minutes. Denis at last noticed this phenomenon, when he cried out loudly, "What do you want?"

"I wish to speak to Monsieur Denis Rigaudier," answered a childish voice.

"I am he you seek," answered Denis.

Upon hearing this, a small boy, with round red cheeks, and a profusion of thick, black, curly hair, slid into the room, sidled up to Rigaudier, and whispered to him in a mysterious manner:

"Does Monsieur know the Château D'Orme?"

"Well, my little man, what of it?"

"If you will be there half an hour from now, Madame Amabel Bertrand will meet you."

Rigaudier was overjoyed at this news. He pressed a franc upon the little messenger, and insisted on him tasting a glass of wine. The boy pocketed the franc, drank his wine gravely, and then said that he must be off, as he was afraid of being discovered by old Chevalier Bertrand, who would certainly skin him alive if he found out what he had been doing.

The boy accordingly made his bow and departed.

Denis determined to start off at once.

(To be concluded.)

Counsel's Opinion.

MR. W——, the well-known barrister, was proceeding towards the Law Courts the other day, fully robed. He was rather daringly accosted by a precocious-looking urchin, who said:

"Beg pardon, sir, but can you tell me what street this is?"

"Certainly, my little man," replied the genial barrister. "This is Chancery Lane."

"Thanks," was the reply; "I just knew it was."

"Then what made you ask me?"

"Well," said the youth, "I thought I'd get counsel's opinion on the point." And the place knew him no more!

Boy Murderer.

A BOSTON boy was accused of the murder of two children, and was tried in that city and convicted. The evidence showed that the boy from childhood had exhibited unnatural and monstrous tendencies of character. When he was nine or ten years old he had maimed and tortured his young companions. There was no apparent motive for these actions, nor for that of the Mullen boy murder, for which he was convicted, nor for that of the Curran girl, which he confessed. If ever there was a case of partial paralysis of the mental faculties it was here. But the boy knew well enough about morals to commit his crimes in secrecy, and to enjoin silence on his victims. He provided himself beforehand with means to accomplish his unaccountable purposes; he reasoned before and after the commission of his bloody deeds. Naturally, therefore, the whole case turned on the question of the boy's moral responsibility. The evidence of eminent physicians who had made the study of insanity a speciality was brought forward, and the argument of the prosecuting attorney, based upon their testimony, was that the prisoner was of sound mind when the offences were committed.

The verdict was a mixed one: guilty of murder in the first degree, with a recommendation that the punishment be imprisonment for life.

The jury would not recognise such a thing as "uncontrollable impulse" in the commission of a crime. The prisoner was found guilty of a crime which, in the American law, is described as "murder in the first degree." Sentence at the time was reserved, but the judge afterwards gave judgment for twenty years in the penitentiary.

JAMES & MARY COOPER.

STRANGE BUT TRUE.

"The lust of gold, unfeeling and remorseless,
The last corruption of degenerate man."
—SAMUEL JOHNSON, "Irene."

AT the Summer Assizes at Croydon, in the year 1809, James Cooper and Mary Cooper, his mother, aged seventy-one years, were indicted for the wilful murder of Joseph Hollis, at Compton, in the county of Surrey, on the 4th of May preceding. The first count in the indictment alleged the murder to have been committed by fracturing the skull of the deceased, and the second count stated the cause of death to have been a wound in the throat.

The case was of rather a singular nature, and depended on circumstances which were proved by a number of different witnesses; and the investigation lasted nearly the whole day. The deceased was a man possessing rather more property than is usual with persons in his class of life. He lived in a small cottage adjoining that occupied by the prisoners, and which, with that of the Coopers, had formerly been one house. It had lately been divided into two tenements, the one being occupied by the deceased, and the other by the two prisoners. There was no door of communication between the two; but it was proved that whatever passed in one could be distinctly heard in the other, and, as the witnesses stated, even the clock could be heard to tick.

The deceased, Hollis, was an old man of about seventy, but was hale and hearty; he had saved money, which he was fond of displaying. One of the witnesses described him as always carrying three canvas bags, in one of which he kept notes, in another gold and silver, and in a third copper money, and if he wanted to pay away only sixpence he would still tip all the gold and silver in his hand, and this same witness declared that he had seen him with as much as £100 in his possession. The whole cottage in which he lived was his property, and the man Cooper was his tenant for the part which he occupied. Nobody lived in Cooper's part but himself and his mother, and Hollis, the deceased, lived alone, a woman of the name of Wisdom going to him daily to complete his little domestic arrangements.

On Wednesday, the 3rd of May, 1809, the day preceding Guildford Fair, he had desired a person of the name of Goddard to go with him to the county town, as he wanted to buy some sheep. This Goddard told him that he could not accompany him, but advised him to be early. On this he declared his intention of setting off the next morning not later than four o'clock, and, having stated this to Mary Wisdom, he told her she need not come to him on the day following. She, therefore, did not on the Thursday make her daily visit; but on the Friday, about ten, she sent her daughter, a girl about thirteen years of age. The child found the door unfastened, and on opening it she saw the deceased lying dead on the floor with a great deal of blood about him. She ran out and saw Moor, the constable, crossing the common, and he immediately returned with her to the cottage. A surgeon was sent for, and several other people soon came. The body was lying on the floor with the legs crossed and the head lying on the arm, evidently composed to that attitude by the murderer after the deed. A cup of coffee, half drunk, was on the table, a piece of toast before the fire, another piece, partly eaten, lay on the hearth, the butter-dish was broken, and the pat of butter on the floor near the dead man's feet. The chair in which he had been sitting was overturned, and his hat was lying near, so that

it appeared that he had been attacked while sitting at his breakfast. The body was most shockingly mangled, the skull was fractured in two places, the jaw broken, a finger cut off, the arms bruised, and the throat cut so as to almost sever the head from the body. Underneath the corpse was discovered a clasp-knife, almost covered in blood, and a poker in a similar condition. From these circumstances, it appeared that a struggle must have taken place, which the prisoners must have heard in their cottage if the murder had been committed by any stranger.

The Coopers, mère et fils, were therefore taken into custody on the Friday evening, and their portion of the cottage searched, but no evidence of their guilt was found. The trunk of the deceased had been rummaged, and as only two shillings were found on his person, it was presumed that robbery had been the motive of the unknown murderer, and that the latter had carried off all his money. The magistrates, on examination, finding nothing but slightly suspicious circumstances against the prisoners, discharged them, but on subsequent inquiries they were again arrested, and the following evidence supplied against them.

The child saw him lying dead.

The night prior to the crime, the deceased and the prisoner had been quarrelling; upon which Hollis declared that, as Cooper had not paid his rent, he would have him out of the cottage, and he actually applied to a person to distrain upon him. In this quarrel, Cooper was heard to violently threaten the old man, swearing that he would be "up-side" with him before a fortnight was over. Mrs. Cooper exclaimed, "God forbid!" but presently said that, as nobody liked the old man, it would not much matter. Since the previous examination of the prisoners, a more minute survey of this cottage had been taken, and concealed in the roof were found various articles of apparel belonging to the male prisoner which were smeared with blood. Upon subsequent inquiry, the knife and poker found in "Old Hollis's" house were also discovered to have belonged to the Coopers, and little doubt remained, therefore, of their being parties to the murder.

The two prisoners were eventually committed for trial, and, while in custody, Mrs. Cooper confessed that she knew of the murder, but denied that she was in any way a party to the foul deed. She stated that her son had gone out that evening, taking the knife and poker with him, and that soon afterwards she heard a noise in the other part of the cottage, followed by cries for help, and presently a heavy fall against the wainscot, but beyond this she said she knew nothing. Upon this evidence the male prisoner was found guilty, but his mother was acquitted.

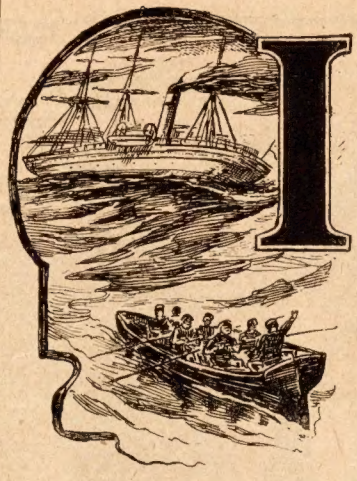
The criminal was executed on the following Monday, and confessed the justice of his sentence.

The Stealing of the Steamship "Ferret."

THE STORY OF ONE OF THE MOST REMARKABLE ROBBERIES ON RECORD.

"A life on the Ocean wave,
A home on the rolling deep,
Where the scattered waters rave,
And the winds their revels keep."

OLD SONG.



IN the year 1881 one of the most ingenious and artfully planned enterprises in the wholesale stealing and swindling line ever heard of in the annals of fraud, was, after partial success, brought to light in Melbourne. The perpetrators and the leading sufferers alike—for they must have been many—made the acquaintance of each other in the fair city of Glasgow, and as the facts which I shall hereafter narrate are even romantically extraordinary in themselves, and are also of special interest and importance to the whole commercial world, I venture to hope that some interest will be taken in them by the readers of FAMOUS CRIMES.

To begin at the beginning, and to make intelligible the complicated organisation by means of which a curious succession of frauds must have been accomplished, it is necessary to state that in the early part of the year 1881 information was forwarded from Scotland to the Australian and other ports touching the mysterious disappearance from the Clyde of a steamer named the "Ferret." The fact was announced under the curious form of, "Vessel lost, stolen, or strayed from the Clyde." The facts of the case are, in substance, as follow: In October, 1880, a man calling himself Walker—an ominous name in the minds of some foolish people—called on a leading ship-chandler's firm in Glasgow, professing to be a broker for a gentleman who contemplated taking for the health of his wife a six months' yachting cruise, and required the ship's stores necessary for the purpose. Satisfactory references were, as usual, required and given. The vessel, Walker said, had been chartered from the Highland Railway Company, and the charterer was alluded to as, although not expressly stated to be, a Mr. Smith, a relative of the then recently deceased First Lord of the Admiralty. The ship, a steamer named the "Ferret," was being overhauled at the time in the yard of Messrs. J. and G. Thomson, of Glasgow, preparatory to the projected trip, and the required goods, including an excellent supply of first-class wines from London, were duly delivered. The account, amounting to £1,490, was presented to Walker, who gave his bill at three months' date, the signature of the Mr. Smith being also asked for and given. The bank, a London one, at which the bill was made payable, had been communicated with, and had replied that the acceptor of the bill had an account there. On January 16, 1881, before the maturity of the bill, the holders received some information which made them uneasy, and on the presentation of the bill when due, it was dishonoured, the acceptor having previously withdrawn both his balance and himself. The "references" were then attempted to be communicated with, but they also had disappeared. Inquiries were, of course, next made about the "Ferret." It appeared that on leaving the Clyde she had steamed south to Cardiff by the aid of a crew of "runners," who had there left her,

the reputed owner, the captain, and some other officers alone remaining. A new crew and a fresh supply of coal having been shipped, she departed on her cruise, the nature of which will appear presently.

The perplexed and unfortunate merchants who had supplied the goods not being able to learn anything as to the whereabouts or destination of the vessel, next applied for information to the Highland Railway Company, from whom the vessel had been chartered, and were answered through their secretary as follows: "That they had already done all in their power to trace the 'Ferret,' having got no charter-money from the parties since they sailed from Glasgow; that they had been in communication with Lloyds and the Board of Trade, and that through Lloyds' agents and the British Consul inquiries had been made all over the world; that about ten days before they had heard that the vessel was at Malta, but on telegraphing there a reply had come that she had not arrived; that they had ordered her to be stopped at Malta should she put in there, and that any information regarding her would be made known to the merchants; concluding that altogether it had been a most mysterious affair."

MR. SMITH AND HIS WIFE CAME ON BOARD.

Here was all that could be discoverable at home, and a very mysterious affair it remained until cleared up to a considerable extent in the Melbourne Police Office, about the middle of June, 1881. How the case got there, and what discoveries were there and elsewhere subsequently made, I will now proceed shortly to state.

The communications with Lloyds' agents and with the Consuls at distant ports had not been without effect. The notices which had appeared in the newspapers had attracted the attention of the authorities in various ports. On May 20, 1881, a steamer corresponding in tonnage with that of the missing vessel entered the bay of Melbourne, bearing the name of the "India." A constable named Davidson, stationed at Queenscliff, at the entrance of Port Phillip, on seeing the vessel, conceived the suspicion—founded on her appearance corresponding with the description he had read—that the visitor was no other than the "Ferret." Within a very few days certain circumstances connected with the conduct of the officers and crew strengthened the suspicions of the police that there was at any rate "something wrong" about this vessel. It was observed that the captain never left her, that the men were never allowed "leave on shore," and that the fires were always so fed that steam could be got up at the shortest notice. An officer of Customs, Mr. Wilson, having been specially instructed to make further inquiry, ascertained that no steamer of the tonnage of this vessel (346 tons) was registered at Lloyds in the name of the "India," but a steamer bearing the name of the "Ferret" of this tonnage was on the register. Noting all these suspicious circumstances, the Customs authorities determined on prompt action. Accordingly, on May 27, the vessel was seized by the Commissioner of Customs, accompanied, in case of resistance, by two crews of the water police, no opposition being attempted by either officers or crew of the vessel. A merely cursory examination of the steamer soon showed how well founded were the suspicions. It was discovered that the name of the vessel had been filed off the bell, and that the number on the coamings of the main hatch had been mutilated and changed, appearing on superficial examination as 77,942, but on being scraped and kerosened other figures came to view, four of which formed part of the number of the "Ferret," the fifth being illegible. The "Ferret's" number was 63,864. On overhauling such ship's books and papers as upon the first search could be found, some of them being in very unusual places of deposit, it was ascertained that the name of the vessel had been removed, and between the leaves of the log-book was found a seaman's "advance note" with the name of the "Ferret" on it, leaving scarcely a doubt, even at this stage, that the vessel was the "Ferret" herself. The reputed owner, Smith, and the master decamped, but were afterwards traced by the police and apprehended, the one in a distant township, Longford, and the other in a Melbourne lodging-house, whence (having while drunk got into a row with his landlady) he was taken to the lock-up, and there recognised as the master of the vessel.

The crew shipped at Cardiff made a full confession, apparently being little further incriminated than in yielding to threats "that their brains would be blown out" if they communicated to others what they had learnt subsequent to their departure from Cardiff. The account of what was done in the interval between such departure and the ship's arrival

at Melbourne showed a most carefully-devised plan to victimise insurance offices and others on a scale and by means which had never, perhaps, before been employed with similar success in the earlier stages of such an adventure.

The vessel having been seized on the charge against the master and reputed owner, Smith, of having falsified the ship's register, the case came on in due course before the Melbourne police-office. The crew told all they knew, and the witnesses before the court became equally explicit. The second steward, the first and second engineers, and a seaman were examined, and their respective stories, condensed, were as follows: The second steward, John Brown, deposed that on October 22, 1880, the chief engineer called on him at the Windsor Hotel, Cardiff, and brought him to the steamer; that he there saw Mr. Walker, the purser, who afterwards went under the name of Wallace; that he signed articles on that day, and on October 25 the vessel left Cardiff for Milford Haven. Mr. Smith and his wife came on board at Cardiff, and Smith said he was the owner. At some of the ports Smith passed under the name of Benard, and was also known by the name of Henderson. They left Milford Haven on November 1, 1880, for Marseilles (as it was given out), but, having passed Gibraltar on the morning of November 11, the ship showed her number; they afterwards turned back in the night without going to Marseilles at all. When passing in first the funnel was white and the ship's boats blue, but during the day the funnel was painted black and the boats white, and, thus changed in appearance, she passed out of the Gut of Gibraltar at night with her lights screened. When passing out, two boats, several buoys, some empty casks, and several other articles, all with the name "Ferret" on them, were cast overboard, the object being evidently to make it appear that the steamer was lost. On the same night the man figuring under the aliases of Benard, Smith, and Henderson called all hands into the cabin and told them that the passage was one of pleasure and business; that for political reasons he was desirous of concealing his identity from the American authorities; that he was going to trade from Brazil to other ports; that he was the owner; and that, after trading some time, he would sell her and reward them handsomely. If they were to divulge anything about the business of the steamer he would blow their brains out. On November 21 they arrived at Cape Verde, anchored, and took in water and ballast, a supply of fowls, pigs, and other stores, Henderson giving his bill, payable in London, to the deluded vendors. After leaving this place, the name of the steamer was changed to the "Benton" by means of paint and carving. She arrived at Santos under the latter name on December 26, 1880. Between that time and January 9, 1881, Henderson was negotiating with agents there to take a cargo of coffee to Marseilles, making the inhabitants and authorities at Santos believe that the steamer had come from Capetown, and that she was en route to England. By these means Henderson obtained on freight a cargo of coffee, 3,992 bags, consigned to different people at Marseilles. On January 11, 1881, they weighed anchor, but, instead of going to Marseilles to deliver the coffee to the consignees, they went direct to Capetown, and on the passage to that place the steamer's name was changed from the "Benton" to the "India," her number and tonnage being also altered. The change in the painting and carving was effected by the carpenters, and the engineers altered the number and tonnage on the iron beam by filling the figures with running lead and relaying a fresh number. They arrived at Capetown under the name of the "India," on January 29, and discharged the coffee by February 3. It was sold by Henderson, and realised from £13,000 to £15,000. On February 14 they left Capetown with coal and ballast, and arrived at Mauritius on March 1. Having there docked the steamer, and scraped and cleaned her, they cleared out for the world at large. They arrived at Port Albany, in Western Australia, and thence sailed direct to Melbourne.

Frederick Nicholas deposed to the same facts, and, in addition, stated that a coloured man, named Watkins, was the first master, and that the master who was arrested at Melbourne, Wright, was chief mate. William Griffin, the first engineer, while corroborating the other witnesses, deposed, in addition, that he joined the ship at Greenock, that he had been introduced by Mr. Joseph Walker, of Gracechurch Street, ship-broker, to Mr. Henderson Smith, who, as he (Griffin) was informed, was about to charter a steamer, with the view of purchasing her afterwards; that Mr. Smith wanted, it was said, a vessel more of a yacht than a carrying vessel, as his wife was ill and ordered to seek a change of climate; that he (Griffin) inquired about several steamers, but could not get a suitable one; that about the beginning of 1880 Mr. Walker, the broker, told Griffin that they had found a suitable vessel, and asked him if he would go in her as chief engineer; that he agreed to do so at £15 per month, but if to the Mediterranean or other voyage, the pay to be £25 per month, or current wages; that he was then introduced by letter to the so-called Mr. Smith, and he agreed to go in the "Ferret"; that he was put on pay in London by Smith at once, and was sent to the vessel at Greenock.

Confirming what has been above set forth as the evidence of the other witnesses, Griffin stated further that, thinking the "diversion of the voyage," by passing through the Straits of Gibraltar, and then out again, as above described, "very strange," he asked Mr. Smith the reason; that Smith seemed loth at first to tell him, but eventually said—upon Griffin promising not to divulge it—that he (Smith) was a colonel of an American regiment, and had held high official position in the United States, etc., but, having been exiled for political reasons, he was desirous of destroying all trace of his whereabouts. Corroborating the evidence previously given, he (Griffin) further said that he wished to leave at Mauritius, but Mr. Smith would not allow him to do so; that he was suspicious all was not right, in spite of Smith's assurances to the contrary; and that during the voyage all the crew were called into the cabin and their names changed, in order to prevent the ship being traced.

Both before and after the taking of the depositions above abstracted, a rigorous search of the vessel was day by day conducted under the guidance of the Customs authorities, and further important discoveries were made which proved what elaborate pains had been taken to make a roving, swindling expedition a great and profitable all-round success. A private printing press was discovered, and in a tin box were found duty stamps of all nations, and an account with a printed heading purporting to be an acknowledgment that a cargo of coffee had been sold by a merchants' firm at La Guayra to Henderson, and a receipt for payment duly stamped. Other papers showed that of proceeds obtained on the fraudulent sale of the coffee by Smith, only about £2,300 had been kept by him, and bills to the amount of £8,000, payable in London, at nine months' date, had been sent home. Payment was immediately stopped by telegram. The original articles of the "Ferret" were found, and a sale note of the cargo of coffee in the name of Mr. G. S. Henderson, in account with Messrs. Henderson and Company, of London, showing the amount received and bags damaged, also turned up. A document was also found containing a long list of directions in cipher, by means of which communications might be made between those in the vessel and others at home in the course of the cruise. Unfortunately, the day before the seizure by the Government, Henderson, alias Smith, accompanied by his wife, succeeded in removing from their cabin whatever they chose, including two heavy iron-bound boxes, which were never traced.

When arrested, Henderson, or Smith, took it very coolly, as he did when taken to the police office. I have condensed in as brief a space as is compatible with clearness the particulars of a case the report of which very naturally filled many columns of the Australian journals at the time. On hearing of Henderson's arrest, Walker decamped, as also did Henderson's wife, but the Melbourne police tracked and captured the two principal actors, and the invalid lady whose cruise had been extended so greatly beyond its original limits surrendered herself. "Walker," whose real name turned out to be Wallace, and another accomplice named Wright, alias "Carlyon," the captain of the "Ferret," were arrested in Melbourne a few days after the capture of Henderson. Wallace was the purser of this much-named craft, and it was believed by the authorities that the cruise of the "Ferret" was to be attributed to a knot of confederates in England and elsewhere, possessing capital and elaborate organisation, and the failure of the attempt no doubt damped their ardour, and it is to be hoped supplied a warning to all who may be exposed to similar piratical operations at home or abroad.

Large as were the dimensions of this naval and commercial fraud, they turned out to be less extensive than at first imagined, and not nearly so serious as the precedent which they might have established, and which, probably, might find imitators. It was a mere chance, the vigilance of one individual, which alone prevented these plunderers from obtaining another valuable cargo at Melbourne, taking it to a distant port, and selling it in their own name, having again transformed the ship during the voyage. It was certainly the first example of any such attempt being carried through with so close an approach to success.

Henderson, Wallace, and Wright were, however, quickly laid by the heels. But all the most difficult parts of their scheme were carried out by them with success. They de-

frauded the owners of the "Ferret" of their charter money, and either them or the insurers of the value of the ship. They obtained by false pretences stores from Glasgow, Cardiff, and Cape Verde. They defrauded merchants at Santos of a valuable cargo of coffee, which they had no difficulty in selling at Capetown. Besides this, it was discovered that they effected various insurances on which they or their agents had been paid.

The three prisoners, Henderson, Wallace, and Wright (the female prisoner having been discharged) were tried at the Victoria Criminal Sessions of the Supreme Court, on three several charges. First, conspiracy to defraud the owners of the "Ferret," the Highland Railway Company; second, conspiracy to defraud intending purchasers of the vessel in Melbourne; and third, conspiracy to deceive the Commissioners of Trade and Customs, by entering the vessel at Melbourne in a false name and to obtain a certificate of sale under which the vessel could have been sold in Melbourne.

The prisoners were acquitted of an attempt to defraud the Railway Company, but were convicted on the other counts of the indictment. Henderson and Wallace were sentenced to seven years' penal servitude, and Wright to penal servitude for three years and six months.

Whilst Henderson was waiting trial in Melbourne Gaol, he made an attempt to escape by filing one of the bars of his window, but was detected by a warder, and at once removed to another cell.

It transpired in evidence at the trial that Wallace and Wright offered the ship for sale in Melbourne privately. A reserve price of £10,000 was placed on the vessel, but no offers were received.

The case excited great interest both in England and Australia by reason of the extraordinary career of these men in the vessel between Glasgow and Melbourne, and the name of the ship "Ferret" has been made memorable in the annals of crime by as bold a system of swindling as was ever conceived, and which commenced in this country, continued along the route to Australia, and was finally cut short in the capital of Victoria.

Abstraction.

A TALE is told—we trust that it is true, but are not prepared to swear to it—of an Irishman who was unlucky enough to be charged with larceny from a shop.

"What have you to say for yourself?" the magistrate demanded.

"Shure, I'm so absent-minded, sorr!"

"Absent-minded! That's no excuse for theft!"

"Well, sorr, I did it in a fit uv *abstraction*, sorr."

Sorra a bit did the magistrate believe him!

Carmody's Dying Speech.

ON June 3, 1734, a man named Michael Carmody, a journeyman weaver, was executed in the County of Cork, Ireland. His branch of business had long been in a very declining way, owing to the wearing of cottons, which was very prejudicial to the woollen manufacture, and in general injurious to the kingdom. The culprit was dressed in clothes made of cotton, and not only the hangman, but the gallows, was decorated with cotton. When Carmody was brought to the place of execution his whole thoughts were turned upon the distresses of his country, and, instead of making use of his last moments with the priest, the poor fellow addressed the surrounding multitude in the following extraordinary oration: "Give ear, oh, good people, to the words of a dying sinner! I confess I have been guilty of many crimes that necessity obliged me to commit, which starving condition I was in, I am well assured, was occasioned by the scarcity of money that has proceeded from the great discouragement of our woollen manufactories.

"Therefore, good Christians, consider, that if you go on to suppress your own goods by wearing such cottons as I am now clothed in, you will bring your country into misery, which will consequently swarm with such unhappy malefactors as your present object is, and the blood of every miserable felon that will hang, after this warning from the gallows, will lie at your door.

"And if you have any regard for the prayers of an expiring mortal, I beg you will not buy of the hangman the cotton garments that now adorn the gallows, because I cannot rest quiet in my grave if I should see the very things worn that brought me to misery, thievery, and this untimely end, all which I pray of the gentry to hinder their children and servants, for their own characters' sake, though they have no tenderness for their country, because none will hereafter wear cottons but oyster-women, criminals, hucksters, and common hangmen."

Perhaps sentiments of a more patriotic nature could not have been uttered by a Sydney or a Russell than were expressed in the coarse, unstudied harangue of this unfortunate malefactor.

Leaves from Our Notebook.

Honour thy Father.

THE Mosaic law ordained that he that curseth his father or his mother shall surely be put to death; and amongst the American Indians and several other primitive nations filial duty is considered as the first of virtues. In more civilised communities parental authority and respect are not so carefully protected, but in Scotland, in 1818, a journeyman plasterer, of the name of Oliver, was tried at Kirkcudbright, before the Steward of the Stewartry and a special jury, for the crime of cursing, and otherwise threatening, and for using personal violence towards his aged and widowed mother. Several witnesses were examined, whose evidence conclusively established the fact of the prisoner having abused her in the grossest manner, and of his having threatened to deprive her of life; none of the witnesses saw the prisoner strike his mother, but one of them affirmed that from various circumstances she had no doubt of his having done so. After a few minutes' consultation, the jury returned a verdict, finding the fact of the prisoner having grossly abused his mother proven, but finding the charge of his having struck her not proven. The prisoner was then addressed by Sir Alexander Gordon in a short but impressive speech, and sentenced to six months' imprisonment, and thereafter to be banished the Stewartry for the space of seven years. This was the last case of the kind ever tried in Scotland.

An Omnibus Story.

ALTHOUGH omnibus companies generally pay fair dividends, the vehicles themselves are not regarded by passengers as sure roads to fortune. Yet it seems that under certain circumstances an omnibus may prove a wonderful Eldorado to the fortunate occupants. Quite recently this occurred to a lady travelling in one of these conveyances to the City Road, who had wealth thrust upon her in a singularly agreeable manner. During the journey a flashily-dressed young man, of dubious appearance, sat by her side, but got out before it came to her turn for alighting. When she did alight, what was her horror to find that her purse, containing luckily only twelve shillings, was gone! In vain was search made by the conductor in the straw; the missing article could not be found. Without any doubt, the flashily-dressed young man had picked her pocket and made off with the proceeds. So said the conductor and the majority of the passengers agreed with him. But the lady, thinking that she might be mistaken, again searched her pocket. The purse did not meet her fingers, but something else did. Withdrawing her hand, she produced a massive ring, set with what appeared to be a white crystal. After this proof there could be little doubt that the flashily-attired fellow-traveller had stolen her purse; so the lady had nothing for it but to ask a friend who had accompanied her to pay both their fares, and to resign herself to the loss.

When recounting the affair to her husband that night, she produced the ring, which she had considered a worthless bit of Brummagem ware, since thieves do not generally sport much real jewellery. Yet the stone was wonderfully brilliant, and the cutting very perfect, while the setting appeared heavy for brass. Altogether they were so struck by its appearance that they took the gewgaw to a leading jeweller. What would he give for it? After some inspection, he offered £80, the stone being a remarkably fine brilliant and the setting pure gold. The above story is not ben trovato, but literally and absolutely true, the incidents having occurred quite recently, and the ring being still in the lady's possession.

Replies to Queries

LE MESURIER (Southsea).—The Fratton Murder shall be told in time.

ED. LORAINE.—Thanks for the letter. Will use it when we deal with that crime.

RECORDER.—(1) The house still stands. (2) Mr. Westwood was murdered in Leicester Square in 1839. Criminals never discovered.

MOUSTACHE.

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